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NOTES AND NEWS.

After Sir Henry Fowler's strong backing of the Secretary of State for India it was only to be expected that ex-Ministers who took part in the division would be found in the Government lobby. Yet only seventeen unofficial Liberals followed their leaders. It is gratifying to notice that a goodly number of Liberals broke allegiance with the Front Opposition Bench and voted for the amendment. We print in another column the names of the eighty-three members who formed the minority, for which Sir W. Wedderburn and Mr. Robinson Souttar were the tellers. As we point out elsewhere, the favourable significance of the debate for India goes a good way beyond the proportions indicated by the mere figures of the division.

One of the most incisive speeches on the Loan Bill was that delivered by Mr. Pickersgill, who put his finger firmly on the real root of the difficulties—the excessive amount of the Home Charges. While admitting, as everybody admits, the utility of railways (with exceptions), he very properly asked: "But what would that avail if in their professed policy of developing the country, the Government of India had produced the effect of impoverishing the people?" His suggestion that Lord Elgin, able and amiable man, might not after all be a Warren Hastings or a Lord Clive, was seized upon by Sir Henry Fowler for a cheap and irrelevant rejoinder. "Had their proceedings been made the subject of Parliamentary enquiries," he said, "we should possibly not have had an Indian Empire"—a reflection that was actually cheered. England is a trustee for India, and apparently then there should be no enquiries into her agents' performance of their duties. If there be no more searching enquiries than the Front Benches seem disposed to permit, it will not be very surprising if we soon have no such trust as an Indian Empire to be enquired about.

There is no "censorship over the Press" at Poona. Lord George Hamilton says the functions of the committee "would necessarily be limited to keeping the responsible officials informed as to the character of the matter published in the newspapers." In India a wider interpretation has been generally adopted. The organisation has been supposed "to be something like an intelligence committee for supplying accurate and trustworthy news to editors of papers." In any case, it is wholly unnecessary. The officials, of course, ought to know the character of the journals in their jurisdiction; but surely they can read them without the aid of a special committee. Explain as the Government may, the committee is intended to be, and it is and will be, a standing menace to local editors. It is, in essence and effect, the nearest approach to a "censorship over the Press" that the Government as yet dare establish. The Press should take it as a complimentary token of interest, and defy the Government by its fidelity to facts, to just argument, and to moderate expression.

It is quite impossible for us to notice a tithe of the cases where Indian communities have expressed their sense of loss through the death of Mr. Gladstone. Let the following resolution, passed at a large meeting, stand as typical of many others:—

That this meeting of the inhabitants of Meherpur, in the district o Nuddea, Bengal, places on record its profound sorrow at the death of Mr. Gladstone, the greatest statesman of the age, as a great loss to the world.

The resolution, we are informed, was "carried in solemn silence, the whole audience standing." Would that our surviving statesmen realised, as Mr. Gladstone did, the value of that touch of nature that makes the whole world kin—its very special value in Indian government.

Mr. Gladstone used to appeal to the judgment of the civilised world. India's silent appeal is before the same tribunal. Thus, the *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, of June 14, brackets India with Ireland, and pronounces a restrained, yet most suggestive, verdict on the English methods of Government, placing the criticism in the most prominent position on its front page. The *Correspondent* is a leading daily of the great commercial city of Hamburg, Liberal in tone, and moderate in expression. The article in question is written by its London correspondent under the prompting of current events. It may be taken as representing the independent view of a cultivated and careful observer, and as such it well deserves attention.

To thoughtful statesmen, as the writer remarks, India and Ireland are objects of deep anxiety. The very fact that he links India with the distressful sister island at home is sufficiently significant; though it is enough to send a cold shiver through the bones of anyone who is familiar with the centuries of Irish turmoil and misery. What is the bottom fact of the correspondent's diagnosis? It is ignorance—blank, resolute ignorance on the part of the governing Power. "How little knowledge of the conditions of both countries," he says, "is possessed by the mass of English members of Parliament, journalists, aye, and even Ministers," is a point that has struck him for years. How this mental obfuscation operates he illustrates afresh from the recent troubles in Belfast. The authorities, of course, seize vigorously on the symptom, and imagine they have got hold of the cause. They bungle the business, therefore, every time, and in the long run it always becomes a question of the strong arm. "With India," the writer proceeds, "the case is precisely the same. The ignorance of the most accomplished English people on the subject is often amazing." Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, and is making, it certainly does not lie with us to dissent from this striking testimony.

The London representative of the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* is naturally astounded at the treatment of the Indian Budget. He writes:—

Ordinarily the Indian Budget does not come on for discussion till close on the end of the Session. This is often put forward as an explanation of the fact that the debate takes place before empty benches. Well, only the other day the Indian Loan of £10,000,000 had to be discussed, at an exceptionally early period of the Session. Again, however, the House was quite empty. Besides the Secretary for India, there were only three Ministers present, sitting or lying: Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour, and the President of the Board of Trade, all asleep or dozing. "Had it been a hundred millions," said the *Daily News* bluntly, "there would have been equal indifference." And yet the invasions of famine and plague, as well as the discreditable frontier war, were involved in the order of the day!

The phlegmatic attitude of British statesmen in the presence of questions of such magnitude—questions fraught with issues affecting the lives of hundreds of millions, as well as the honour and the interest of the ruling Power—may well amaze the intelligent foreigner.

The correspondent turns next to the increasing frequency of cases of "disgraceful or shocking treatment even of highly respectable Indians," which he naturally regards as a serious symptom. He refers to Sir William Wedderburn in terms that he has not borrowed from Lord G. Hamilton. It may suffice here to remark that he has been impressed with Sir William's representations, acknowledging him to be "one of the best informed" on Indian conditions, and

even giving him a certificate of honesty and humanity, which contrasts significantly with the waspish inanities of official disapproval. Of course, the writer refers specifically to the dreadful case of Dr. Sircar, detailing the incidents. And this is his conclusion:—

It does not indeed follow from a case of this sort that such behaviour is habitual in the English army. But it is remarkable that not a word is said about this occurrence in the Press here. In INDIA alone are all the particulars set forth in their repulsiveness. The predominance of England, which is ever more and more threatened by internal and external dangers in Southern Asia, takes damage alike from incidents of this character and from the conspiracy of silence in the London Press.

If there be truth in the saying that contemporary independent opinion anticipates the verdict of history, it seems extremely probable that that verdict will bear hardly on the action of the Government and of its underlings and sycophants, as well as on those that permit their intelligence to be lulled or misled by official optimism. It is, we confess, a great encouragement to find an able and unbiassed observer like the London representative of the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* spontaneously laying the finger of grave blame on three facts which we ourselves have emphasised so strongly: the perfunctory handling of Indian affairs in the House of Commons, the unworthy treatment of respectable Indians by Europeans, and the strange "conspiracy of silence" in the British Press regarding the lamentable case of Dr. Sircar. The end of these things is too obvious for prophecy. The simple statement of the facts is enough to appal any man that understands their bearings, and refrains from muzzling his intelligence.

It is alleged by *Truth* that "flint-skinning parsimony" has been displayed towards the English nurses that went out to India to help to combat the plague. If, as our contemporary states, their pay is only 175 rupees a month, nothing found, it certainly cannot be called extravagant. Yet this modicum is said to be "frequently sweated down by a variety of stoppages," and the remainder has a way of getting into vexatious arrear, while "several ladies have been kept waiting for six months for the repayment of expenses which they incurred in going out to Bombay." This is an ugly representation; and it is a mode of reducing the cost of the plague which no one on this side could regard with patience. It is to be hoped that there is some mistake in *Truth's* information. "The value of such work as the nurses undertake," says our contemporary most justly, "cannot be estimated in rupees, but in common gratitude the Plague Committee ought, at any rate, to treat them with more generosity and consideration." We trust this complaint will be seen to without a moment's delay.

A certain light is thrown upon the allegation by the reported weakness of the financial position of the Municipality of Bombay. The Municipal Commissioner has addressed a disturbing Note to the Standing Committee. The surplus cash balances have been reduced to the perilously low figure of half a lakh of rupees, and Mr. Snow expresses the opinion that it is only by the exercise of the greatest vigilance, and on the assumption that expenditure will not be incurred until income has been realised, that the Municipality will be in a position to meet its liabilities up to the close of July. The demands on the Municipal exchequer by the Plague Committee—while it existed—were no doubt extraordinary and prolonged—some say, very extravagant. There must be stringent enquiry on this point, for unless the Corporation be vindicated, we may soon find it in the same difficulties as its fellow in Calcutta. There should be no difficulty, in a city like Bombay, in meeting the crisis with promptitude and efficacy. Mr. Snow's Note will be unpleasant enough both to the taxpayer and to the sanitary reformer; but it will have a bracing effect on such slackness as may be proved to have existed. Still the tax will be severely felt in many quarters. We should hope, however, that the nurses have not been made to suffer from the municipal lack of foresight.

The *Englishman* has lately thought proper to attack the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, alleging that the latter's descriptions of popular feeling on the plague measures have done much to intensify the opposition, and more generally that the growing distrust with which the Indians regard the English is due to such papers. It is not our intention to interfere in this controversy, wherein, no doubt, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* will be able to give a good account of itself, but it may not be out of place to call attention to a temperate article in its issue of June 2, in which it points out some very much more probable causes of the growth of this distrust—the increasing number of young District Magistrates, the smaller control exercised over them, the frequent transfers, and the want of friendly consultation with Indians. And all this has been urged at least as strongly by the *Pioneer* and other Anglo-Indian newspapers as by the inculpated *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has especially angered the *Englishman* by calling attention to the almost invariable acquittals of Europeans charged with killing Indians. But is the Indian Press to be blamed for demanding full enquiry in all such cases? Take the case of Dr. Laing. Attacked by a crowd, he and another doctor took refuge on a staircase up which only one person could come at a time. A lad of seventeen attempted to do so, and Dr. Laing at once shot him, so that he died soon after. The two doctors were thus in an impregnable position, but while his colleague stayed where he was, Dr. Laing descended almost immediately, and seeing five persons approaching him in the courtyard, he fired again. This time he killed a boy of twelve. Surely, here is a case in which there is no impropriety in demanding some further enquiry as to whether this bloodshed was necessary for self-defence, and in regretting that the matter was not referred to the sessions.

The Calcutta *Capital* expresses deep anxiety about the notorious lack of that concord which ought to prevail in a large and mixed community like that of the capital of India. It appeals to the most ordinary observation for confirmation of its statement "that there is being displayed among the lower classes of the city a growing insolence and ill-feeling," which it regards as "uncalled for and unprovoked." If the observation be correct, it is a very unhappy circumstance; and one would like to know how far it can be fairly connected with the plague measures. It also occurs forcibly to us that the very same complaint comes increasingly from the Indian side of the community. Even Indians of the highest respectability and culture lament "a growing insolence and ill-feeling" on the part of Englishmen, which they regard as "uncalled for and unprovoked." *Capital* says that the existing state of things can only have one issue—"the slaughter of a great number of innocent persons, and the stirring up of racial hatred and all the bestial passions which appear in human kind when the strong arm of responsible authority is wanting." This is likely enough, and it is a severe comment on the authorities left in charge by the absentee Government. Only the position has two sides to it, and both must be steadily kept in view.

When railway extension in India is the rage with our statesmen, it is worth while to recall a suggestion thrown out by Mr. W. Martin Wood in a criticism of Mr. Horace Bell's paper on "Recent Indian Railway Policy," published in the *Journal of the Society of Arts* (April 29). Mr. Martin Wood points to the unsafeness of the ready assumption that "Indian railway extension has not already gone on as rapidly as is consistent with the financial strain that India can sustain, or that her more urgent necessities require, in comparison with other classes of public works."

To be more precise, the time has come to consider whether the capital, skill, and labour now demanded to be expended on the previous and present *kind* of railway extension, might not far more profitably, in India's interests, be directed in other directions. Still keeping in view the special service that iron-ways can supply, we must admit that, except for a few patches, they have scarcely touched the real *rural* India. This can only be reached by an entirely different class of lines of simpler and lighter construction; so that it is high time to face the difficult problem of applying the scant funds available, and the ingenuity of painstaking rather than ambitious engineers, to the India of the villages, in which dwell three-fourths of all the producers in the great peninsula. This as yet untouched field of railway enterprise will have to be developed from within, as far as possible through local traders' influence and funds, though it might be aided by European capital. This intensive side of Indian railway policy demands serious attention on the part of responsible authorities; though it may not attract City financiers.

This "intensive" process is pre-eminently a field for the exertion of local talent and the investment of local funds, and would form a sound development of the resources of the country in accordance with its felt needs.

The official Report on irrigation in the North-West Provinces during 1896-97 is exceptionally rosy. The

canals in this region averaged nearly 5 per cent. net revenue on capital during the five years immediately preceding. But the returns for 1896-97 indicate an excess of 55 per cent. over the average of those five years. They show 7¼ per cent. The failure of the rains jeopardised the crops; but the irrigation works eventually raised crops estimated for the season at no less than 12 crores of rupees, or half as much again as the total capital cost of the canal system concerned. This is very gratifying news, on the face of it. We only hope that the report sets forth the full factors in the case—a business-like method that is not often enough observed. The whole system of official direction is exceedingly expensive, and much loss is frequently incurred by amateur experimentation. But 7¼ per cent. looks well, notwithstanding; and if even the ordinary returns keep up, the consumer's burden may well be somewhat lightened, or at any rate we should be able to look for some reduction of the capital loans. The importance of the system in mitigation of famine is not to be disputed.

Last week we drew attention to the probable decline in the export of opium owing to the rise in exchange. Now there come reports of successful experiments in growing jute in America, where the climate of South Carolina is not unlike that of Bengal. If this be so, the jute trade with America is bound to decrease. This will not immediately diminish the revenue in anything like the extent of the falling-off in the export of opium; but it will seriously affect those employed in the jute mills. The real gravity, however, of the news lies in the serious effect that a decline in these trades will have on the excess of exports. India, having to lay down many millions yearly in London, must find the money either by its excess of exports or by borrowing. Therefore, if the trade in opium and jute declines, India must either keep on borrowing, or must force a market for other goods by offering them at a lower price. In other words, the debt must increase or the tribute become more onerous. And the first is obviously only a desperate and suicidal method of staving off the second—staving it off expensively and but for a moment.

The London correspondent of the *Champion* sets out "the true objective of the currency problem." It is to be reached by three steps. First, day to day borrowing is not to be thought of; the twenty millions, or whatever the sum may be, must be provided in a lump and financed by the British Treasury. This will make "the quacks" wince. "This will pull them up; and then real business will begin." Next, the politico-financial portion of the problem: the formulation of "India's demand for refund of her resources, squandered since 1875 beyond her borders in Afghanistan and High Asia, in pursuance of the British Cabinet's precious 'Imperial policy.'" Let the Bill—on a moderate computation, 120 millions sterling—be got ready, if possible, for presentation to the Committee. Thirdly, there is the long overdue demand "that half the annual Home Charges shall be defrayed by the United Kingdom, whose capital and industries those charges go to support year by year." This programme means business, and there is a very great deal to be said for each step in the process.

The Godavery District Conference of this year, which was held in the end of May, is reported as a gratifying success. It was attended by 850 delegates, including the zemindars and leading rayats; and the visitors besides were over 500. The Rev. Mr. Davis, who was Chairman of the Reception Committee, showed an excellent example of friendly interest. "No Government," as he wisely said, "can attain perfection without the co-operation of its subjects, and organisations like this Conference, if wisely conducted, will broaden the horizon of the people." At the close of the proceedings, he testified frankly to "the intelligence and moderation" displayed throughout. "A similar gathering in my own country," he declared, "could not have been better conducted." The matters of chief local and general interest appear to have been very fully discussed during the three days of the meeting. The success of the gathering does high credit to the organisers, considering that their chief material had to be sought in the rural villages. It speaks especially well for the exertions of Mr. Ganjam Venkaratnam, who has done so much for the well-being of the District. Such signs of intelligent life in the rural village will be marked with deep interest in England.

Mr. Crowe's speech at the Birthday Durbar at Poona well deserves attention. Speaking as the judge who tried Damodar Chapekar, he declared that, after watching all the evidence carefully, he found "no indication of any conspiracy or design on the part of any section of the Poona community which could have prompted the crime." Yet this supposed conspiracy was for a long time the excuse of the Bombay Government for their high-handed action. But still more striking is Mr. Crowe's testimony to the good conduct of the people. He said: "In Poona you have borne your troubles with a courage and fortitude which is deserving of all praise. By the energy and resources of the officers specially appointed, and the patient manner in which you have submitted to the rules and regulations prescribed, you have set an example, as law-abiding citizens, not only to the rest of the Presidency, but to the whole Empire." And it is these law-abiding citizens, these examples to the Empire, that have long suffered, and still suffer, from the punitive police. Is it not time that the Government deported Mr. Crowe? Or, in the alternative, removed the preposterous punitive embargo?

It is one of the most pleasant features of Indian life in London that so many of the young men over here for study take an active interest in the various societies of their countrymen. The following resolution may be put on record for the encouragement of others to make themselves similarly useful in patriotic ways, and to gain a practical experience that cannot but prove helpful to them in the business of life:

That the London Indian Society records with great satisfaction and gratification the valuable services rendered by Mr. Balwant Singh as a zealous member, painstaking Secretary, and prudent Vice-President; and in view of his coming departure the Society wishes him God speed in his voyage and all success in his future career.

Mr. Balwant Singh has just been called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, and now returns home to the Punjab to practise his profession.

From Bangalore are reported to the *Madras Mail* three marriages in a high social plane, which constitute exemplary steps in a practical social reform. In one case the bride's father is a Smartha Telugu Brahmin gentleman, a follower of Sri Sankaracharya; and the father of the bridegroom is a Canarese-speaking Madhwa gentleman of the Viyasaroya Mutt. The bride is the daughter of a Professor of Mathematics at the Central College in Bangalore, and the bridegroom is a son of the District Sessions Judge. The enlightened example they have quietly shown is regarded as tending powerfully to bridging over the gulf that has hitherto separated the followers of Sankaracharya and Madhwacharya, the founders of the great rival Brahminical sects. In the other cases the dividing gulf is not so wide; yet intermarriages have been rare in their societies, and all but unexampled in families of like social standing. The ages of the parties, we observe, are more than usually satisfactory. The importance of such cases lies in the spontaneous working of the tendency to reform within the societies themselves. It is the internal impulse that tells with permanent effects for good.

The Rev. Dr. Fairbairn, the distinguished Principal of Mansfield College, at Oxford, is going out to India to deliver the Haskell lectures for 1898-99. He describes himself as charged, in this capacity, with "a special mission to speak to the educated Hindus on behalf of religious truth." Happily, Dr. Fairbairn is a large-minded man, and a student of philosophy as well as of theology; and "some of the oldest and dearest studies he had ever followed had had to do with the religions of India, and had to do with them still." It may be anticipated, therefore, that he will be able to see "the truth" on more than one of its sides. "The responsibility of England for India," he said, "is moral, spiritual, intellectual, political, and it ought to be above all transcendentally religious; and unless the interpretation were taken in that large sense, such a poor endeavour as that on which it is my destiny soon to enter would be an impertinence and in vain." We think Dr. Fairbairn's discretion may be relied on; but we confess we shall be particularly interested to hear what he has to say on the "moral" branch of England's responsibility. He is too acute a man, we take it, to allow other people to mount their spectacles on his nose, much less to do his thinking for him.

"MODERATION" IN MILLIONS.

THE resumed debate on the new loan of ten millions sterling was notable for two things: first what the *Times* calls "a very remarkable and courageous speech" by Sir Henry Fowler; and, second, the marked reluctance of Mr. Vicary Gibbs and Sir William Houldsworth to give their unreserved intellectual concurrence with their mechanical vote. These indications, it seems to us, point to the forcible action of contrary currents of opinion, which may before long alter the whole aspect of the situation. Which of the currents will eventually prevail, there can be no doubt whatever. One is artificial, formal, traditional, and all but wholly destitute of the vitality that springs from the perennial sources of a nation's everyday conditions of thought and activity. The other, if still less in volume, hemmed in and obstructed by the artificial arrangements devised to facilitate the first, and not yet set free at the wells of origin, issues from the solid rock of national life and business. The crisis of conflict is steadily pressing. For this occasion, and for another and others, the dexterity of official manipulation and the influence of official prestige may sweep all before them. But the handwriting is patent on the wall, and the true forces of Indian national life are bound to assert their just effects in a future not so very distant as some of our authorities and commentators imagine.

The attitude of Sir Henry Fowler is certainly "remarkable," and, in a sense, it is also "courageous." Nor do we for a moment doubt that his action is perfectly straightforward and even patriotic. What we do say is that it is deplorably perverse; not from the point of view of party considerations, but simply in the light of the facts that one assumes an ex-Secretary for India to have at his fingers' ends. There is, indeed, a great deal to be said for the principle of keeping party recrimination out of Indian discussions; and it is a principle that the friends of India in Parliament have steadily kept in view. But that Sir Henry Fowler should constitute himself the champion of Lord George Hamilton, and throw his ægis over the prostrate body of his sorely bested rival—that is an exhibition of chivalry which we observe has been characterised by financial experts in terms that we hesitate to adopt. We content ourselves with the words of the *Times*—"remarkable and courageous"—though with a little implication of meaning not perhaps intended by our contemporary. The Secretary of State, forsooth, "had exhausted his debating rights;" "the forms of the House prevented him from interposing again in the debate." Yet Mr. Balfour was sitting—or lying—on the Front Bench; though perhaps it might have been a violation of the forms of the House to wake him up. He is not supposed, indeed, to know anything about the subject; but that would not have prevented him from making half-an-hour's speech equally relevant, if not so dramatically effective, as that "very remarkable and courageous speech" of Sir Henry Fowler's.

Sir Henry Fowler having thus drawn the fire upon himself, it becomes necessary to deal with his special strategy. Now, with regard to the first section of the new loan—the £3,384,000 required in August "to pay off capitalists"—we have already agreed that this is good business. But for all that, let us first see exactly what the operation means. The debt is not absolutely "paid off"; it is only transformed, with a slight diminution, into another debt. The amount of advantage is precisely measured by the saving effected through the lower rate of the new loan: so much, neither more nor less. It is a very small matter really; but, such as it is, it is in the right direction. The first substantial contention of Sir Henry Fowler is that the Home Charges mainly represent interest on capital, wisely laid out on reproductive public works. He seemed to imagine a perfunctory reference enough for one-half of these charges when he had held up the beneficial equivalents of the other half. But let us confine ourselves to Sir Henry's £8,815,800—said to be half of the Home Charges—which he justifies, and uses as an argument to justify the second section of the new loan, namely, £2,615,000 to be expended on railways. We have already pointed out that the waste and extravagance on railway building has been most serious; and on this single ground it seems to us wholly improper that another penny should be voted without enquiry. But, on the specific point raised, instead of repeating what we have urged over and over again, we quote the crushing reply made by Mr. A. J. Wilson in the *Investors' Review* (June 10):—

> This £8,815,800 "is no drain upon India, as it is paid out of the revenues of the railways." Indeed, Sir Henry, and pray how are the "revenues of the railways" collected in India converted into sterling payable in London? Is it not by the sale of Indian produce? And is not this Indian produce furnished by the labour of the people of India? And if the amount of these exports in excess of the imports be insufficient to cover the annual charges payable here by the Indian Government, must not commerce be disarranged? Are not these railway charges, in other words, a form of indirect taxation, which may be crushing in its weight upon the Indian people? Even if it is sufficient, does not all this produce exported from India, in order that its proceeds may be devoted to meeting Government charges here, imply that the profits of the trade go not to the producer, not to the cultivator and humble taxpayer, but into the Exchequer? And is not the real question that the Government has to investigate the question whether the strain thus placed upon the natives of India is or is not altogether in excess of their capacity to bear it?

If any further argument were necessary to prove the urgent need for the enquiry asked for by Sir William Wedderburn's amendment, it may be borrowed from the late Sir George Chesney, who was not only a Conservative but a good hater of the National Congress and all its ways. Only four years ago, Sir George wrote this pungent conclusion to his study of the Public Works Department, and it occurs in his chapter on "Railways": "The present mode of administrating the Indian Public Works is indefensible. It is at the root of almost all the mistakes, blunders, and objectless changes of purpose, and especially the lamentable delays which have occurred to discredit the Indian Government." If Sir George Chesney considered the administration to be discreditable, surely it is time for enquiry before delivering over to it another two millions and a-half of sterling money.

Sir Henry next took up the salt duties, but he limited himself to a statement of what he believed to be facts. Nobody dares to apologise for the salt duties. Sir Henry admitted an anna a head, "and I do not say," he added, "that it is not a heavy taxation." Whether it be heavy or not is a matter relative to the individual, and when the individual is on the brink of famine it comes to be serious enough. Sir Henry then returned to his public works, and made great show of rending Mr. Swift MacNeill on the question of irrigation. We do not think it fair to imply that Mr. Swift MacNeill meant more than that irrigation was comparatively "neglected." An enumeration of the miles of irrigating canals and the millions of irrigated acres is no answer whatever to his contention: we all know that great things have been done. We even know that the rivers, if tapped at all, "must be tapped where there is sufficient water, and not taken at a point so as to create a swamp, and thus induce the danger of malaria." Mr. Swift MacNeill did not ask anybody to tap them in any improper place. Mr. Balfour himself could not have been more eloquently illogical than Sir Henry. But the point shows how urgently necessary was preliminary enquiry as to what is to be done with the millions of sterling. The administration of the irrigation works, we may add, is very far from being so rosy as Sir Henry imagines, even on the imperfect and confusing information officially vouchsafed.

Sir Henry Fowler's last point was scored over Mr. Samuel Smith. Sir Henry triumphantly told Mr. Smith that "there is no land tax in India." "The land tax," he said, "is rent, not taxation." This, according to the *Times*, was a correction of an "egregious blunder." How far it is from being a blunder, egregious or other, both Sir Henry Fowler and the *Times* writer would see by a perusal of a chapter in Sir William Wedderburn's brochure, "The Skeleton at the (Jubilee) Feast," reprinted from INDIA (May, 1897). It is futile to quibble about terms. Let us get down to facts. The principle that was to govern land assessments was first distinctly formulated in an elaborated despatch from the Court of Directors, dated December 17, 1856; and this despatch declared that

> the right of the Government is not a rent which consists of all the surplus produce after paying the cost of cultivation, and the profits of agricultural stock, but a land revenue only, which ought, if possible, to be so lightly assessed as to leave a surplus or rent to the occupier, whether he in fact let the land to others or retain it in his own hands.

The Government claim was to be, not a rent, but a tax upon rent. In 1864 Sir Charles Wood fixed 50 per cent. of the net produce as the amount ordinarily claimable on account of the Government demand. Now behold the

transformations of time and able government. Speaking of the Bombay Presidency, Sir Bartle Frere described the assessment as coming for the most part under the three following economic classes: (1) a land tax fixed more or less arbitrarily, and absorbing a varying proportion of the true rent; (2) a full rent, leaving nothing to the cultivator but the wages of his labour and the interest on his capital; and (3) a rent and something more, trenching on the wages of labour or the profits of capital. To those three classes Sir Louis Mallet adds a fourth: "I am also informed," he says, "that in many cases lands have been assessed which barely pay the cost of cultivation and yield no rent at all." And, says Sir William Wedderburn: "To these four classes I must regretfully add yet a fifth and still more grievous case—where the total crop is insufficient to pay the cost of cultivation, and where the assessment must be paid out of wages earned elsewhere or from cash obtained from the moneylender." This last direful case "not only exists"—although one would hardly expect it—why, it even "embraces the vast majority of holdings in the Dekkhan." Yet here is an ex-Secretary of State solemnly assuring Parliament that "there is no land tax in India." If there is no land tax, it is because there is something worse, which includes it. "The shearer of the Indian sheep, disregarding his master's orders, not only takes the whole of the fleece, but allows his shears to bite deep into the skin and into the flesh." Such being Sir Henry Fowler's knowledge and treatment of the facts, one begins to understand how, still harking back to Clive, he can calmly declare himself "surprised at Lord George Hamilton's moderation."

BUSINESS DISCOUNT OF OPTIMISM.

TO the optimism of the Indian Government there is no end. All circumstances, however ominous, but serve to strengthen it: the most contradictory appearances are spoken of as alike propitious. Do the exports immensely exceed the imports, we hear nothing of the drain on India, but only of the vast expansion of the total trade. Does the excess of exports diminish, a new loan is resorted to with a light heart, while a song of triumph is sung over the artificial improvement in exchange. To those outside of the charmed circle, it cannot but be obvious that the finances of India can never be in a sound state while an exhausting tribute harasses the present and a crushing indebtedness mortgages the future. To the official optimist, it appears, everything is satisfactory so long as the present beneficent system can be kept going, whatever the expedients necessary to stave off the collapse.

In fact, outside the official ranks a very different view in commercial and financial matters is now apparent, even among those who are least disposed to criticise unduly, much less to attack, the Government. Notably is this to be seen in the Anglo-Indian newspapers. The writers in these papers are certainly no opponents of the English Government in India; on the contrary, they usually distinguish themselves by their fervour in its defence. They are often more zealous than the officials themselves in opposing the political advancement of the Indians; and their scent for sedition surpasses that of an elder of the Scotch Kirk for heresy. Yet a careful study of the Anglo-Indian papers makes it evident that of late some of the most weighty have shown an increasing distrust of the financial position of the country and of the financial proposals of the Government. Giving voice to the opinions of the Anglo-Indian community, they show none of that light-hearted confidence which contrasts so strangely with crushing taxation, falling exports, and increasing debt. They view the situation as one of the utmost gravity.

But in the course of the last few days we have had abundant evidence that this distrust prevails in another class—a class that on the subject in question has immensely more weight. The optimism as to the financial and commercial prosperity of India shown by Lord George Hamilton and his advisers has received the strongest rebuke possible in the influential protests against the composition of the new Currency Committee, and no less in the speeches on the resumed debate on the Indian Loan Bill delivered by members who are, in a special sense, representatives of the monied classes in England. The high hopes of the Secretary of State not only fail to satisfy the professed critics of the Government and the champions of the people of India, they are not only discounted by those who put forward the views of the Anglo-Indian community, but they are now flouted by the bankers and merchants in England. These men, who are certainly fully alive to the advantages of our Indian Empire, who are in overwhelming majority political supporters of the present Ministry, and who speak on these questions with authority, unite in declaring the situation to be fraught with serious danger. The Government is wounded in the house of its friends. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader of the strong protests which have been forwarded to the Government on behalf of the bankers and merchants of London and Liverpool concerning the composition of the new Currency Commission. An even stronger memorial from "the manufacturers, merchants, shippers, etc., of Glasgow and the West of Scotland" has followed. They openly say that the preponderance of officials and ex-officials makes the Committee "fail to command public confidence."

This pronounced want of confidence in the Government and their advisers on Indian finance is emphasised by the detailed declarations of Mr. Vicary Gibbs and Sir William Houldsworth in the debate on June 17. Mr. Vicary Gibbs is, in a special sense, representative of the bankers and monied interest of the City of London, and an authority on all questions of finance from that point of view. Sir William Houldsworth sits for Manchester, and may be considered as equally representative of the Lancashire manufacturing interest. It was, therefore, a very striking demonstration of the real feelings of these sections of the community that both these men, though faithfully voting with the Government, yet gave the greater part of their speeches to a pungent and most damaging criticism. Mr. Gibbs, indeed, devoted himself chiefly to the currency question, but he went so far as to say that "he should have unhesitatingly supported the motion for a committee had it been proposed that the enquiry should be confined to financial matters"; while Sir William Houldsworth was even more explicit in his condemnation, and travelled over a much wider field. He said pointedly this:—

> In view, however, of the optimistic statements of the noble lord as to the future commercial prosperity of India, he felt bound to say that this view was not shared in the slightest degree by those who were most competent to form an opinion—that was to say, the commercial classes themselves. Those who were engaged in commerce and industry in India, and those engaged in commerce with India, all agreed that under present conditions there was every prospect of our commercial interests being jeopardised. Under present conditions the margin of exports over imports was very seriously diminishing, and the noble lord's explanation as to the plague and famine did not explain the whole of the immense decrease in the margin. He must say that those engaged in the industries of India and in commerce with India had little or no confidence in the financial policy of the Indian Government.

Here we have from one who is himself an expert and is closely in touch with those most competent to form a judgment in such matters, both a declaration of the opinion of the commercial classes and of his own reasons for dissenting from the policy of the government. It is true that these classes form their judgment without reference to the Indian taxpayer, that it is not the people of India, but the financial and trading interest of England, which is their chief concern; but this makes their opinion all the more damaging to the Government, when it coincides with that put forward by those to whom the interests of the Indians are the first consideration. If both these representative speakers, looking on matters from such different points of view, agree in pronouncing condemnation, then the Government may well pause and doubt if all is for the best even in the best-governed country in the world. In Sir William Houldsworth's opinion, the currency policy of the Government is seriously diminishing the excess of exports, while a large excess is necessary if India is to discharge her obligations and support her expensive administration. If the excess fall below the amount which must for one purpose or another be paid in England, recourse must be had to loans; and loans by increasing the obligations of India in the future will beget still heavier loans. And what must be the end of this? It is not to be wondered at if the commercial world is appalled. The optimists hope to raise the value of the rupee without diminishing the exports, attributing such decrease as there has been to famine and plague alone. Sir William justly declares that this hope is vain, that the surplus of exports will continue to shrink, and that the difficulties of the Government under this head will consequently increase. This vista of deficit and

debt gives a very foolish aspect to the optimism of Lord George Hamilton.

Besides the light they throw on the rift between the Indian Government and the world of commerce, two conclusions may be drawn from these speeches. First, how little can be gathered about the real feelings of the House apart from the great party questions, or about the true balance of outside opinion, from the numbers as they appear in the division list. Here we have two of the strongest attacks on the Government policy from men who afterwards supported it by their vote. Yet of those who notice the numbers of the majority, how few will study the speeches and see the real weight of opinion on the side of the minority! And, secondly, how completely the necessity of making such large payments in England dominates and embarrasses the prosperity of India! Gloomy, indeed, is the financial outlook while these great payments have to be made. The division list was all that Lord George could wish, but the course of the debate was full of warning that his optimism is but a fool's paradise, and that a heavy reckoning looms in the not far distant future.

THE BURDEN OF INDIA.

ELSEWHERE in our present issue will be found a report of an influential "Conference of all the Indians in England," which was held in St. Martin's Town Hall, in London, on Monday evening. The meeting was representative, full, and enthusiastic. The resolutions covered the whole ground of the multifarious subjects of more prominent complaint in the administration of India; and they were supported by men whose names are household words throughout the peninsula. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji spoke with the verve of youth and the discretion of age. Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt was specially qualified to deal with the legal restrictions of recent introduction. Mr. Bose was at home in the discussion of the proposed invasion of the principle of local self-government. Mr. Khalil handled with real argumentative ability the Imperial character of the frontier campaigning. The tone of the speakers was more in sorrow than in anger. They appealed steadily to facts, and on the facts they advanced arguments of moderation. They cried for justice, and they implored conciliation. Yet their pathetic appeal, we fear, will penetrate but a little way to the minds of the British public. The British public found but scant mention of the meeting in its daily paper at breakfast next morning. The English speakers gave a shrewd piece of advice when they urged their Indian friends to go straight to the British public in person, depending neither on professed politicians nor on party journals for the promotion of their case. The summer campaign of Mr. Bose and Mr. Dutt has established the value of the plan.

Mr. Dadabhai had a heavy row to hoe, but he buckled himself manfully to the task. He seized the bottom fact of the situation, and disentangled it from all extraneous matter. India is bleeding—bleeding to death. Lord Salisbury himself is the patentee of the appropriate metaphor. The business of the physician, therefore, is to get at the cause of the bleeding, and to stop it at once, or at least as far as may be. Any other practice is the merest quackery, and as such doomed to failure. The currency expedients are wholly outside legitimate art. Granting that the constitution of the Committee is perfect—although, in fact, it is utterly unsatisfactory, lacking, as it does, a single expert representative of the most interested party, the suffering Indian taxpayers—granting its absolute perfection, yet it is wholly incapable of working the moral and material miracle that it has been set up to perform. The currency difficulty is the merest symptom of a symptom of the disease. It arises from financial stress at Calcutta; and this financial stress is the direct outcome of infatuated government and administration. The essential mischief is the impoverished condition of the country—a country rich in resources, but crushed under the aggressive methods and the costly execution of good works at a wrong time, and an external policy wholly unnecessary and unfitted for any imaginable time. The closing of the mints has in no way worked beneficially for the inhabitants of India. It has, on the contrary, by inducing an artificial value of the rupee, disorganised business by contraction of the circulation, and added to the burden of the Indian taxpayer a covert load of taxation, which Mr. Dadabhai figures out to 45 per cent. The proposed introduction of a gold standard, in continuation of this harassing policy, will simply increase the covert burden. The apparent "success" of the policy of closing the mints is mainly due, as we have already urged, to the persistence in borrowing. Without continual loans, the rupee could not possibly have been forced up to the neighbourhood of 16d. in the existing conditions. But these loans go to swell the home charges dischargeable in gold, while the country is crippled beyond the power of maintaining the activity of exports necessary to meet the demands of London. No manipulation of currency can affect the fundamental factors of the case. The one possible relief lies in the reduction of the home charges, and that, unhappily, is the last quarter to which the Government will look for a remedy. There are none so blind as those that will not see. But an ostrich-like policy does not alter facts; and, when all is said and done, it will still remain sternly true, as Mr. Dadabhai says, that "until this deplorable 'bleeding' of India is stopped, there is little chance, if any, of saving India and the British Empire from serious disasters or destruction."

The Government of India feel keenly, though vaguely (owing to their prejudice and dense ignorance of what is going on), that there is something wrong somewhere. They discern dissatisfaction, and they jump to the conclusion that it is disaffection—whatever disaffection may be. Having got on the wrong line, they go ahead with Anglo-Saxon vigour, and the faster they go, the further they go wrong. The appalling perverseness of the new Sedition Law was set forth and illustrated by Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt with the clearness and convincingness of a practical administrator. Mr. Dutt's evident reluctance to speak his full mind testifies impressively to the serious mistake of the new departure in restriction of liberty of speech in India. Surely, in the face of the great Proclamation of 1858, it is no light matter to discriminate invidiously in law between different classes of her Majesty's subjects; to hang over Indians in other countries the menace of prosecution on their return; and to take away in hasty conclave the Press liberty of half a century. Yet this is what the Sedition Acts accomplish, without any intelligible reason, to say nothing of a clamant public cause. The Government motive is not appreciable by any person outside Government circles. Surely there ought to be some outstanding and compelling cause before an Indian newspaper editor should be sent to gaol with hard labour, without trial for any specific offence; and that, too, by a mere district magistrate, who is at the same time head of the local police. Just look at the case, as Mr. R. C. Dutt asked his hearers to look at it, in operation in England. Let Englishmen take the situation home to themselves, and compare it with the freedom they enjoy. Let them ask themselves, and ask their parliamentary representatives, why this is so in India—what the Indians have done that such severity should be meted out to them? If these things were done in "a time of profound peace," what was the reason? The only possible answer is the new suspicion and distrust awakened in the Government on account of their crass ignorance of the true conditions. It is the outcome of senseless panic. But unhappily, as Mr. Dutt pointed out with pathetic regret, it "is calculated to alienate the people, and to weaken the foundations of the British Empire in the East." There remains but to hope that, as Mr. Gladstone's Government expunged Lord Lytton's Gagging Act, so the next Liberal Government will sweep from the statute book the dishonourable record of the present Government—the present Government, for Mr. Dutt showed how largely Lord Elgin was controlled, or coerced, by express instructions from Lord George Hamilton.

Mr. Bose cogently enforced the protest against the proposed deprivation of such municipal self-government as now exists in Calcutta. He was able to adduce from official documents ample testimony to the efficiency of the municipal administration. So late as 1893, Sir Antony MacDonnell, then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, specially referred to the good work done in the department of sanitation—the department now particularly assailed, not indeed so much for what it has failed to do, but rather for what it may conceivably fail to do in spite of the experience of twenty-two years. Mr. Bose declared Calcutta, where he has his own home, to be the healthiest city in Bengal. Not but there may be shortcomings in the administration; nobody would deny that in the case of

any municipality. But, if there was any weak spot, or any probably inefficient element under possible strain, the existing Act provides ample means of remedy. To outside observers it certainly does seem an odd thing that it should be proposed to substitute three authorities instead of one; and to make one of these authorities—the Chairman, a nominee of Government—absolutely irresponsible. The official answer to the objection of irresponsibility is characteristic: it puts a man on his mettle, and ensures more correct action than if he were responsible. The Government are apparently insensible to ridicule, or to the insolence of such an answer. But the simple fact is that they care nothing for remonstrances; they want to have the whip hand, and they are going to take it. As Mr. Bose pointed out, it is not Calcutta merely that is involved; the whole system of local self-government is deliberately menaced. We do not anticipate that the meeting's appeal to the Government will result either in the withdrawal or in the effectual modification of the grossly reactionary measure; but it was right to enter a strong protest, based on facts supplied from the Government's own armoury.

The injustice of piling the cost of the frontier expeditions upon the Indian taxpayer is too scandalous to require further demonstration. The imperial character of such adventures is frankly enough recognised when the recognition is handy; and indeed decency required that the Indian Government should send home a formal disclaimer of the necessity for assistance. The real significance of that step is not over-clouded by any doubt whatever. The official game requires that the discussion of Indian affairs in England be limited to the irreducible minimum. But when one passes in review the substance of the four resolutions by this Conference, one cannot but be amazed at the moderation of the speakers and the fatuity of the Government.

INDIA'S REAL TRADE BALANCE.

By An Anglo-Indian.

THE *Economist* of June 3 did useful service in presenting and casting up the total figures of India's mercantile transactions with the outer world as recorded in official figures from 1835-6 to 1896-7. This period, covering sixty-one years, is ample enough to permit wide margins for such variations as arise from public events which affect the average of large statistics in international accounts. The special advantage of such comprehensive survey, at this juncture, is that it serves to bring out in strong relief the great factors of India's mercantile, monetary, and financial position, apart from the superficial, but just now pressing, exigencies of currency, exchange, standards, and other technical controversies which distract the attention of the public from the one overpowering financial problem of our Indian Empire. Yet our contemporary's exposition somewhat reflected that distraction, by its figures being partly "run on" with the text of the argument which was intended to throw side-lights on these acute temporary controversies. So let us take the liberty of setting out these large totals so that the whole situation may, as far as is practicable, be taken in at a glance. These are the *Economist's* figures, to which we have applied general corroboration :—

Total Foreign Trade of British India, 1834-5 to 1895-6.

Exports of Merchandise	Rx. 3064,000,000
Imports.	
Merchandise	1931,000,000
Silver	376,000,000
Gold	146,700,000
(Net, i.e., Exports Deducted)	
Values of Treasure Imported ..	522,700,000
Total Imports	2453,700,000
India's Commercial Deficiency on the Period	Rx. 610,300,000

These are the bare figures on the surface. As will be seen, they average over that large period ten millions per annum; but within the last twenty years the annual deficit has been very much larger; hence the present intolerable pressure on the industrial and commercial resources of India. But there are certain large additions to be made to the above total. Of these, chief and most obvious is the addition to the sterling debt of India, in the period, of about 110 millions. This, as will be seen, brings India's adverse balance up to date as Rx. 720,300,000; that is, nearly twelve millions per annum; and it must again be remembered that the average has been immensely accelerated during the last twenty years.

The *Economist* points out that there remains to be added one other large item in order to show the true adverse position of India's commercial and monetary balance-sheet. That is the addition that requires to be made in respect of freight and trade profits on the exports of merchandise. For, while the "laid down" valuation of imports is duly computed in the returns of the importing country, those items of export value do not appear in those returns, but only in the returns at the several, mainly European, ports of destination. This factor is well understood by statisticians. It was long since made clear by Sir Robert Giffen in his paper, read before the Royal Statistical Society, on "The Proper Treatment of Import and Export Statistics." Now what is the addition required to be made to the above total of exports so as to show more distinctly India's perennial trade deficit? Some statisticians add 20 per cent. to the declared values of exports in the country of departure. Others take 15. But, to be well within the mark, let us add only 10 per cent. This adds to the above total of .. .. Rx. 720,300,000

Freight and Profits on Exports ..	306,400,000
India's Adverse Trade Balance ..	Rx. 1,026,700,000
An Average for the Sixty-one Years of	Rx. 16,831,147·5

Here again it must be remembered that averages disguise the present and recent conditions of this portentous subject. For instance, the excess of India's exports in the fourteen years ending with 1887-8 amounted to Rx. 227,713,733 or Rx. 16,265,266·6 per annum. The Council Bills, drawn for Home Charges in the same period, were Rx. 237,205,376—a parallel which is aptly significant. In the later period of five years ending 1895-6, the trade deficit reached the astounding total of Rx. 139,024,853, or a yearly drain of Rx. 23,804,990. In this period, as is well known, the smaller drawings of the India Office had to be largely made up for by sterling loans and unfunded bonds—several millions of which remain out until the next Loan Bill comes to sweep them into the gulf of permanent sterling debt. The *Economist* cites the total of the Home Charges during its sixty-one years' period as 585 millions, the corresponding excess of trade exports being, as above, 610 millions. The difference between these two sums is more than accounted for by growth in the sterling debt. Our contemporary suggests that to the total of excess exports should be added the amount of private (European) remittances to the United Kingdom including those of mercantile firms, tea and other companies. The amount of these has been variously guessed at from two to five millions. As to this side factor two remarks are needed: first, a considerable portion of these remittances must already be included in the export returns as coming in the shape of produce; second, other portions of these, especially strictly private remittances, do undoubtedly escape counting in the trade returns because of their coming in the shape of gems or other valuables, pocket cash, or bank drafts. Hence we avoid adding this item to our total of trade deficit. But this reminds us of one substantial item, overlooked by our contemporary, which ought to be so added. That is the transfer of Indian Government rupee stock—"enfaced" for payment here in its sterling equivalent. These amounts, which are a definite item of export—recently very brisk in prospect of the 16d. rupee—can easily be obtained by due reference. These amounts of "enfaced paper" had been recorded in the hitherto useful "Explanatory Memorandum"; but have dropped out of the current eviscerated and truncated form of that official document.

There are various other additions to, or qualifications of, the total of India's trade balance sheet as set out above, the aggregate effect of which is greatly to enhance the monetary burden on British India proper and its people.

These include the amounts pertaining to the (Native) Indian States, which affect both exports and imports, especially as regards treasure. There is also the item of consumption by the European denizens of India. All these, and much more bearing on the full and true exposition of this vital and peculiarly interesting domain of the "large finance," are comprised in Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's invaluable "Appendix III," long since placed before Lord Welby's Royal Commission, which will no doubt duly appear in that long-looked-for Report. That Appendix is, however, already available; and it is safe to assert that no man who has not mastered the facts embodied in that document—which some may possibly have worked out for themselves—is warranted in dealing with this subject of imperial moment in any positive or authoritative manner. It may be remarked, in passing, that the ex-Secretary of State for India showed in his speeches during the recent Loan Bill debate that he, for one, has scarcely gone beyond the fringe of the subject.

There is one reflection or *obiter dictum* weakly indulged in by the standard financial journal which calls for pertinent remark. It is in the passage, "India has by her trade realised enough to enable her to pay the enormous quantities of gold and silver which she has absorbed." Well, that is the superficial fact. But, be it noted, those "enormous" amounts are already included in the figures on the minus side of the account as set out above. And as to the enormity of this import of treasure during sixty-one years, what does it come to? Let this Rx. 8½ millions per annum be divided up amongst the well-nigh 300 millions of the Indian peoples—for this applies not to British India alone—and how much of "treasure" and coin will they have apiece? The *Economist* has at its disposal plenty of "calculating boys" who can easily run the sum out to its veriest decimal. This was done as regards the thirty-three years ending 1892, in this journal for November, 1897, pp. 342-4, where it was shown that these enormous sums work out at a *few pence* per annum per head. There may be found in the same paper other weighty considerations inseparably connected with this vast and ominous Imperial problem which are habitually overlooked, if not by the *Economist*, by most of our really responsible authorities of both parties. Let these cease from vain Philistinian superficialities, and be—wise in time.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

(FROM A PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

I SUPPOSE I need hardly inform anyone who knows this House of Commons, and who is also aware that Lord George Hamilton had asked it to assent to an East India Loan of £10,000,000, that the loan was agreed to. The House never seems so sleepily content as when it is assenting to demands for millions, the more the better. And it has had many treats of this sort during this Session. It will not be remembered as a great Session, but it will be a very expensive one for the country. In the case of this East India Loan, Sir William Wedderburn had moved an amendment to the effect that the House declined to sanction a sterling loan of £10,000,000 until a Select Committee on an examination of the East India accounts should have reported that such loan was in the interest of the Indian taxpayer and would not unduly increase the burden he now sustains. But who in the House cares about the Indian taxpayer? Sir William Wedderburn does, and a few, a very few, others. But the vast majority know nothing about him and care less, and of course Sir William Wedderburn's amendment was rejected.

The debate did not—it could not—conclude without the usual pæan of praise of the Indian Government from Sir Henry Fowler. Sir Henry said significantly enough when he rose that he would not have taken part in the debate at all were it not for the fact that the forms of the House prevented Lord George Hamilton from intervening again. So Sir Henry spoke for Lord George—as he always does. I have shown more than once in this column that I am aware of the hopeless and floundering incapacity of the present Secretary of State for India, and yet he is in some ways preferable to Sir Henry Fowler, for about the latter there is a peculiarly aggressive tone of self-righteousness, which, I am bound in common fairness to acknowledge, does not disfigure the feeble utterances of his noble successor. "I cannot sit still and hear the Government of India unfairly criticised," he exclaimed with a burst of almost holy indignation, and he wound up by declaring that this loan was a "fair and reasonable proposal," that he was "surprised at the moderation of the noble lord," and expected that it "would yet have to be a great deal more." With that one remark in this very remarkable utterance I think we may all agree.

A very considerable portion of the time of the House has been occupied by the discussion of the Benefices Bill, a Bill which at first sight would not suggest interest, still less excitement. House of Commons proceedings, however, resemble a cricket match in being full of surprises. This Bill, which is aimed at putting down certain scandals connected with the hawking and sale of livings in the Church, gave rise to a singularly lively sitting on Thursday, and has been heard of again since. Mr. Samuel Smith, one of the friends of India, began what I may almost call the storm by attacking the extreme ritualistic practices of some of the clergy. Indeed, he declared that there is a deep and widespread plot inside the Church to betray her to Rome. He said he was backed up by loyal Churchmen all over the country. Going on, he reminded the House that really it was the only court of appeal against the daring, open, and flagrant violations of "the Protestant religion established by law." Nor was he content with general assertions, for Mr. Smith gave proof after proof of the correctness of what he was urging. It was a remarkable and telling speech, and the House, which was listless when he rose, was roused and excited when he sat down. The differences of mere politics are as nothing compared with the feeling aroused when matters of belief and creed enter into a controversy.

Sir William Harcourt, who had gathered up his papers, apparently with the intention of strolling off when Mr. Smith rose, saw in a moment the importance of the occasion. He sat down again and bided his time. Then he flung himself into the controversy with vigour. He protested against Bishops condoning the offences of priests who perjured themselves at the very altar. "And who are these men?" he went on; "they are the men into whose schools you force the children of the people who have not yet abjured the principles of the Reformation." That point he stabbed in again and again amid repeated cheers. Mr. Balfour was singularly irritable and restless while this speech was being delivered, and he had to listen to three strong protests from his own side of the House against the evils revealed by Mr. Smith before he had a chance of speaking. At last he rose, and his task was a difficult one. He declared himself to be altogether out of sympathy with the ritualists, but he maintained that the Bill before the House had nothing to do with them. And then, having no case, he proceeded to sneer at and abuse Sir William Harcourt. He raked up some remarks made twenty-four years ago by Mr. Gladstone in regard to Sir William Harcourt. Their appropriateness to the present day may be gathered from the fact that one of them was to the effect that Sir William Harcourt "is still in his Parliamentary youth!" But from being silly Mr. Balfour became what, to do him justice, he seldom is—abusive and vulgar. Here is a specimen:—

Mr. Balfour: I cannot imagine how he (Sir William) reconciles such a course with his conscience.

Sir William Harcourt: Why not?

Mr. Balfour: I will tell him why. The right hon. gentleman has never in his life desired a reform except so far as he could turn it into political capital.

There were loud and repeated shouts of "Oh, oh," "Shame," and "Withdraw." Indeed, the outcries and the shouting were louder than anything I have before heard this Session. The Speaker had to intervene, saying that no rule of order had been exceeded. Mr. Balfour, however, acknowledged that he had exceeded the bounds of courtesy, and then proceeded to make matters as bad again, if not worse, by saying that Sir William had never desired a reform which did not happen to fit in with popular clamour—("Oh, oh," and "Withdraw")—well, with the popular feeling of the moment. It was poor and pitiable stuff from a man of undoubted ability, and showed what a tight corner he was in.

He had some more trials the next night, for Sir John Gorst had to explain the Education Vote. Sir John does not often get a chance of speaking in the House. When he does, the Liberals expect a treat and the Tories look out for squalls, and neither side is disappointed. On Friday

it was really delicious to hear Sir John, with that blandly acid manner of his, pulling Mr. Balfour's Education Bill of last year to bits. He acknowledged that there had already been an ominous falling off in the subscriptions to Voluntary Schools. Of course the Liberals cheered lustily, for had they not predicted this very result, and is it not a keen luxury to be able to say, "We told you so"? More—Sir John went on to declare that the Bible teaching in the London Board Schools was immeasurably superior to that in Voluntary Schools. Now this was hitting the "Churchy" party in a very vulnerable spot. To be told that the Board Schools beat their parsons' pet establishments in anything, say, in arithmetic or in geography, would be bad enough, but to declare that the Board Schools are superior to the others with regard to religious teaching, this was terrible indeed. Then Sir John turned his smiling attention to two other bulwarks of Toryism—the farmer and the squire. His scorn for these gentry is open and avowed. He remarked that somehow or other they did not love elementary education. They seemed to associate it with agricultural depression and low rents. Moreover, they hated it because it deprived them of willing servants, and gave the labourer wings with which to fly away from his parish. Then he wound up by declaring that our whole system of education is bad, absurd, and inadequate, and hopelessly behind that of other nations.

I need not say that the Liberals had been busy with their cheers during all this, and Sir William Harcourt enjoyed it hugely. He was up in a minute when he saw his chance, complimenting Sir John on his honest statement. Here we are, he said, spending nearly 12 millions a year on elementary education, and the Minister responsible says it is an absurd and ridiculous system. What will the Government do? What has it done in the 3½ years it has enjoyed all the advantages of an overwhelming majority? Nothing except hand over half a million to the Church, and a trifle to the Board Schools! And then very cleverly, by protesting against the sacerdotal control of voluntary schools in the country, Sir William, to the huge indignation of Mr. Balfour, brought up the ritualistic business again. I understand that the fury within the Tory ranks at Sir John Gorst is unbounded. The other parliamentary doings of the week call for no notice.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

Thursday, June 16.—Mr. Curzon stated in the House of Commons that a preliminary agreement for the extension of the northern railway line from Peking to Shan-hai-wan as far Niu-chwang was signed yesterday by the representatives of a British syndicate and the Chinese Director-General of Railways. The Peking correspondent of the *Times* reported that the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank had agreed to provide a capital of 16,000,000 taels for the extension. This arrangement upsets the negotiations of the Russo-Chinese Bank—that is to say, of the Russian Government—and prevents it from obtaining, by means of a Russian loan, Russian control of the sole line of railway connecting the capital with the north. The port of Niu-chwang has a large trade with Manchuria on the north and with Shanghai on the south; its total commerce amounting in 1896 to as much as £3,000,000. The British shipping in 1896 was represented by 349,600 tons; the Russian by 3,628 tons. The existing European staff will be kept on till the redemption of the loan capital; so that British interests ought to be protected from an obvious menace.

The Cuban news was limited to the shelling of Caimanera once more yesterday by the Americans.—It was denied that the German Government has any intention of deviating from neutrality in respect of the Philippines.

France was in the throes of a Ministerial crisis. Yesterday President Faure held a conference with MM. Dupuy, Brisson, Ribot, and Bourgeois.

The first ballots of the General Election in Germany, cast yesterday, showed a considerable number of Socialist victories; but the general result must await the second ballot.

Friday, June 17.—Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart., the distinguished artist, died at the age of 65. His only son, Philip, succeeds to the title.

Mr. Asquith, opening a new Liberal club at Launceston, passed severe criticisms on the policy of the Government in the Far East.

It was reported yesterday that the American Fleet for a third time bombarded the Spanish defences of Santiago harbour. The American accounts stated that the western batteries were dismantled, with heavy loss to the Spaniards; the Spanish accounts specified the loss at three killed and 16 wounded.—The Hong-Kong correspondent of the *Times* described the Spanish position at Manila as desperate, the city being invested and the garrison being driven back steadily. The final attack is understood to be reserved till the fresh American troops arrive. These were expected yesterday.—Admiral Camara's squadron was reported to have sailed from Cadiz—destination unknown.

President Faure invited M. Ribot to form a "Cabinet of reconciliation."

Saturday, June 18.—Official announcement was made that the usual Naval Manœuvres will not be held this year, but that the Channel and Reserve squadrons will go on cruise during the summer. It is understood that the main reason for this decision is the maintenance of the minimum authorised reserve of coal, which is threatened by the coal strike in South Wales. The announcement was received with not a little surprise, and some rather wild speculation.

M. Ribot declined to form a Ministry, finding himself "not sufficiently marked out by the situation," which is interpreted as meaning that the Radical claims were too strong for him. President Faure thereupon sent for M. Sarrien, who belongs to the Moderate Radical section, and invited him to try to form a Ministry "on the principle of Republican conciliation."

The Marquis di Rudini "ended his inglorious tenure of office by an inglorious resignation," without facing the charge of his opponents that he had powerfully contributed to bringing about the deplorable condition in which the recent disorders have landed Italy. His request that the Chamber should suspend its sittings, pending the deliberations of the King on the situation, led to a general uproar. The House adjourned *sine die*.

Sunday, June 19.—Major-General Shafter's force was not yet reported at Cuba. The insurgents at Guantanamo promised a reinforcement of 2,200 men in a few days.—The Captain-General of the Philippines officially reported to Madrid confirmation of the critical position of the Spaniards at Manila, which is expected to capitulate on the arrival of the American reinforcements.—The destination of the Cadiz squadron still remained a mystery, but the Americans did not expect it would visit their coast.

M. Pavloff refused the Tsung-li-Yamên's request for facilities to dock and harbour the new Chinese cruisers on the way from Germany at Port Arthur, such privilege being reserved for Chinese ships whose foreign officers are exclusively Russian.—Odessa merchants were officially informed that Russian goods will be admitted at Port Arthur duty free.—At the instance of Sir Robert Hart, there was issued an Imperial decree sanctioning a considerably increased grant for the maintenance of the Chinese Maritime Customs.

The Cairo correspondent of the *Times* reported the terms of the sale by the Government of the Daira-Sanieh estates, including 256,000 acres of land, nine sugar-factories, 375 miles of agricultural railways, and other property. The figure is £6,431,500—the actual amount of the Daira debt.

Monday, June 20.—The negotiations between the American and Spanish Governments for the exchange of Lieutenant Hobson and his men, taken prisoners on the "Merrimac," fell through. The Spanish Government decided to refuse—a refusal that caused much surprise at Washington.—The Hong-Kong correspondent of the *Times* reported the position in Manila as unchanged, the insurgents faithfully fulfilling their pledges to the American Admiral.

M. Sarrien undertook to form a new French Ministry, and was in busy consultation with possible colleagues.

The final figures of the first ballots in the general election in Germany showed that the coalition of the two Conservative parties and the National Liberals had lost 19 seats, while their hopes on the second ballot are somewhat reduced as compared with 1893. The Radicals stood pretty much where they were. The Clerical Centre won three seats, with eight favourable second chances more than in 1893. The Social Democrats scored largely, gaining 8 seats, and 19 more chances in the second ballot.

Tuesday, June 21.—The Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of the new Hospital buildings at University College, London, to be erected at the cost of Sir J. Blundell Maple, Bart., M.P. Sir Blundell, who is a business neighbour, has promised some £120,000—an act of princely munificence towards the care of the sick poor of London unparalleled since the foundation of "Guy's" by Thomas Guy, more than two centuries ago.

The launch of H.M.S. "Albion" at Blackwall, under the auspices of the Duke and Duchess of York, was unhappily attended by a distressing accident. Some 200 people were thrown into the water by the breaking down of the wooden staging they occupied, through the backwash of the displacement caused by the plunge of the ship. The same night thirty-four bodies were recovered.

At a general meeting held at Grosvenor House, under the presidency of the Duke of Westminster, an executive committee was formed to raise a National Memorial to Mr. Gladstone.

Major-General Shafter's force was reported off Santiago.—

The Madrid correspondent of the *Times* spoke of indications of a growing feeling in favour of peace in Spain, notably in Catalonia.

M. Sarrien failed to form a Cabinet.

WEDNESDAY, June 22.—The Queen expressed, by telegram, her distress at the great loss of life at Blackwall on the occasion of the launch of H.M.S. "Albion," and her deep sympathy with the families of the victims.

Mr. Morley, speaking at the annual meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation, strongly criticised the domestic and social policy of the Government.

Major-General Shafter commenced to land the American troops near Santiago, under cover of the American warships, and with the co-operation of the insurgents by land.—Ex-President Cleveland yesterday made a strong declaration against a policy of expansion and annexation abroad.

The Peking correspondent of the *Times* reported that the delegate of the Governor of Ho-nan and the Anglo-Italian Syndicate had signed a contract authorising the syndicate to work for sixty years the coal and iron mines in that province. The contract, he said, carries the right to build railways connecting the mines with the main lines and the navigable waterways.

President Faure, after conference with the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber, sent for M. Peytral, and invited him to form a Cabinet. M. Peytral is a Radical senator. He promised to make the attempt.

The *Times* correspondent at Sierra Leone reported the capture of Bompeh, a stronghold of the insurgent natives, by the British. The enemy sustained heavy losses.

THE LONDON INDIAN SOCIETY.

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

STRONG RESOLUTIONS AND EARNEST SPEECHES.

"A Conference of all the Indians resident in the United Kingdom" is a large order and not easily fulfilled. Still the meeting in St. Martin's Town Hall on Monday evening was considerable in numbers and representative in character. A goodly sprinkling of Englishmen were also present; and there was a pleasant admixture of ladies, a few of whom were Indian. The Hall was quite filled. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji took the chair amid cordial demonstrations of welcome. Mr. Dadabhai is nothing if not business-like, and so he at once proceeded to submit the first resolution. That resolution is sufficiently formidable in print; in fact it is a summary argument, and it handles the mysteries of currency. But Mr. Dadabhai is at home in currency, and he blazed a path through the apparent jungle with remarkable promptitude. Singling out the points, he swept the subordinate arguments into their subordinate places, and indicated a clear way to his conclusion: namely, that the one method of saving the patient's life is to stop the financial hemorrhage. By the lucidity of his presentation of the essential points, he carried the audience with him enthusiastically. Still the business man, Mr. Dadabhai frankly claimed that he had set a good example in speaking shortly and to the point, and required the succeeding speakers to act up to the model he had presented. Good humoured as the suggestion was, it operated with repressive effect on Dr. Sarat Mullick, his seconder, who was judiciously brief—so much so that he left enough of his regulation time to allow Mr. Martin Wood to put in his oar with excellent effect.

"So much for the material evils," said Mr. Dadabhai. "But there are still worse evils than these—moral evils—restraints on liberty." Mr. R. C. Dutt took up the moral evils in proposing the second resolution. Mr. Dutt impressively stated his regret, as an old officer of the Crown, at having to speak to such a condemnatory resolution, but he took the courage of duty from the disastrously reckless and unwise legislation of the Indian Government. He had his subject at his tongue's end, of course; but his careful verification of statements by reference to a Blue-book, with which he had armed himself, occasionally interrupted the oratorical stream. Yet it is especially important to get at the precise facts, particularly in appealing to the English public; and his historical review of the futilities of Press gagging, and his exposure of the one-sided laws recently enacted, were effective, while his contrast of the repeal of Lord Lytton's Act by Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1880 and Lord George Hamilton's coercion of Lord Elgin in the concoction of the recent restrictions was a decided hit. Lord George did not seem to be popular just then. Mr. Dutt tickled the audience greatly by the supposition of the application of a similar law in England. Suppose a magistrate sent for the editor of a great London or Manchester daily, told him he "had been informed" that he had done so-and-so, and asked him to provide security! Why, the Indian editor was in the position of an ancient English "witch." Float, and you are burned alive as guilty; sink, and you are innocent—and drowned. Mr. Dutt lamented the Government's distrust of the people, and yearned for conciliation.

Mr. A. M. Bose, in moving the third resolution, rightly impressed the fact that, though the terms referred only to Calcutta, they really applied to the whole country. It is the principle of local self-government that is at stake. He strikingly pointed out that the resolution was simply a vindication of the sagacity and foresight of great administrators of the past, whose generous work was in danger of being undone. He gave Calcutta a first-rate sanitary certificate, which made the exodus to Simla slightly ludicrous; and showed by quotations from official documents how utterly unnecessary the proposed legislation is. On the face of it, three authorities—one of them Government-appointed and irresponsible—are not likely to work satisfactorily. But that is a subordinate point; the real point is that the Government distrust the people. A chance reference to Parliament gave occasion to Mr. Bose to hope that Mr. Dadabhai would soon return to Westminster—a hope that moved the assemblage deeply. Mr. Bose's oratorical fervour and pliant gesture greatly interested the audience.

Mr. Khalil soberly and argumentatively made good his case on the fourth resolution. Mr. Balwant Singh's modest reluctance to inflict a speech "at this late hour" (ten was chiming as he spoke) was rather cruelly accepted by some waggish friends in literal sense. The younger men, here and there, were more energetic in expression—not unnaturally, perhaps—than the older hands. Mr. Roy well said that the Government could not possibly stop the work of regeneration they had set in motion; but it may be doubted whether Mr. Dutt and Mr. Bose will refuse to pay their taxes in order to bring Government to its bearings. The English speakers wisely urged the direct appeal to the people of this country. Altogether, the Conference was a great success.

A Conference of Indians resident in the United Kingdom was held on Monday, June 20, at St. Martin's Town Hall, London, under the Presidency of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. There was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said they had met to consider four resolutions. The first, which he had been invited to propose, dealt with that troublesome subject the currency question, upon the proper treatment of which depended the welfare of hundreds of millions of people. (Hear.) The motion he had to submit for their acceptance was as follows:—

> That fall or rise in exchange does not in itself matter in true international trade, which adjusts itself automatically to the requirements of exchange; that closing the mints or introducing the gold standard does not and cannot save a single farthing to the Indian taxpayers in their remittances for "Home Charges"; that closing the mints and thereby raising the true rupee of about 11d. of gold to a false rupee of 16d. of gold is a covert act of exacting 45 per cent. more taxation from the Indian taxpayers, and at the same time of increasing the salaries of officials, and other payments in India by Government to the same extent; that the introduction of gold standard will simply add more to the existing grievous burdens of the taxpayers, to the extent of the cost of the alteration; that the real cause of the terrible evils of poverty, famine, plague, false currency, etc., is what Lord Salisbury truly calls the "bleeding" of India (or as he says "India must be bled"), and the "bleeding" is further increased by the fall in exchange or rise in gold; that until this most deplorable "bleeding" of India is stopped there is little chance, if any, of saving India and the British Empire from serious disasters or destruction; and lastly, that the constitution of the present Currency Committee is utterly unsatisfactory, as the suffering Indian taxpayer is not at all represented.

This resolution spoke for itself: and therefore he would confine his remarks to two important points. It was, in the first place, assumed that by the closing of the Indian mints the Indian people were relieved of taxation to the extent of some 11 or 12 crores of rupees, because the closing of the mints had raised the intrinsic value of the rupee from 11d to 16d. But the assumption was ill-founded; the people were still paying every farthing, although now the money was extracted from them in a covert manner which was not realised by the world at large. The mischief did not end there. (Hear, hear.) If this taxation had been honestly and straightforwardly imposed they would have been able to show the world that India was hopelessly bankrupt. But by reason of the covert manner in which the burden was laid upon them, two or three times as much more was extracted from the people without the world becoming aware of the evil results. He trusted that these facts would be fully thrashed out by the Currency Committee. (Hear, hear.) He could only say that if that body desired to hear his evidence it was at their disposal. (Cheers.) The assumption that the closing of the mints had saved the people of India a large amount of taxation being ill-founded, then he submitted the whole superstructure of the Government case broke down. (Hear, hear.) His second point was that the miseries of India would never be allayed by any device until a new condition of things was brought about. The whole difficulty arose from their political condition. In order to pay their political tribute—which had to be done in gold—the people of India had to send home a certain amount of produce, and this was the real source of their trouble. These home charges were more than the country could bear. (Cheers.) The Currency Committee which was to consider this question, might be composed of able and judicially-minded men; he had not a word to say

against them, but human nature was human nature all the world over, and the fact remained that the party most concerned in this matter—the Indian taxpayer, and especially the Indian rayat—are totally unrepresented on the Committee. ("Shame.") Therefore he feared it was hopeless to expect the Committee to go into the question whether or not the closing of the mints had really been beneficial to the taxpayer. (Cheers.)

Dr. Sarat Mullick, in seconding, said they were told that India lies bleeding at the feet of the British people, and that the bleeding was carried on in so scientific a manner that syncope must inevitably supervene. A committee of political quacks had been called in to treat the patient, but little could be hoped for from that, and he relied more on the generosity of the British people to give the natives of India a fair hearing. Let them in their strong solicitude for the welfare of their country adopt a policy of peace, retrenchment, and reform, and then they could march shoulder to shoulder along the path of progress and liberty until they reached the dawn of a brighter day, when India would once more take up her position in the vanguard of the nations of the world, enriching it—as she did in days long past—with triumphs of art and the victories of peace, purity, and righteousness.

Mr. Martin Wood said that ten years ago, when this agitation commenced, he thus described the situation: "The real difficulties of British India are not those of currency or reforms of any kind, but are substantial and irresistible under the policy that has long been pursued in regard to our Indian empire. Whilst a large proportion of her produce has to be exported to defray the inevitable cost of an alien Government, and when another large proportion of her revenue is spent on unproductive military expenditure beyond her borders, no re-arrangement of her currency system can afford real relief." That was as true to-day as ten years ago, the only difference being that the evil had become far more aggravated during the decade.

The resolution was then put to the meeting, and unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt moved:—

That this meeting condemns the new Sedition Law of India, (1) which makes invidious distinctions between different classes of her Majesty's subjects; (2) which seeks to restrict the free discussion of Indian measures by her Majesty's Indian subjects in England, by threats of prosecution on their return to India; (3) which takes away the liberty of the Press that has been enjoyed in India for over half-a-century, and substitutes a method of repression unworthy of the British Government; (4) which empowers magistrates in India, who are heads of the police, to demand security for good behaviour from editors of newspapers, to refuse such security when offered, and to send the editors to gaol with hard labour, *without trial for any specific offence*; (5) and lastly, which is based on suspicion and distrust against the people and is thereby calculated to alienate the people and weaken the foundations of the British Empire in the East.

He said he felt some hesitation in speaking at that gathering, for the best years of his life had been spent in the service of the great Indian Government, and he had a pardonable pride in the fact that he had done his humble little to promote good administration. But this resolution dealt with such a monstrous blunder committed by the Indian Government—a blunder liable to be followed by such disastrous consequences—that he felt it to be his duty to his fellow countrymen to raise a voice of warning against a reckless and unwise piece of legislation. (Hear, hear.) The idea of gagging the Indian Press was by no means a new one. Twenty years ago, Lord Lytton, while engaged in a frontier war, conceived the idea of silencing the criticism of the Native Press by means of a Gagging Act, and it was not until a Liberal Government came into power that it was expunged from the Statute book by that righteous statesman whose recent death had caused such sorrow all the world over. And now another Viceroy had passed an Act gagging not only the Vernacular but also the English Press. ("Shame.") He did not think it was destined to last long. (Hear, hear.) He was assured that the leaders of Liberal thought would make an early effort to secure the removal of an Act which was a disgrace to British legislation (cheers), and which, he was sorry to say, was initiated not by the Indian Government but by the Home Government. What did this Act do? It provided that if any native Indian subject criticised an Act of the Indian Government in this country, the Indian Government should have the power of prosecuting him; not in Great Britain where the criticism was uttered, or by an English magistrate, or English jury, but when he returned to India—it might be five or six years later—before an Indian magistrate, who was also head of the police. ("Shame.") This provision was aimed solely at native Indian subjects of her Majesty; should an Englishman be so misguided—(laughter)—as to criticise an Act of the Indian Government, there was no power to prosecute him should he go to India. Was that giving equal justice to all classes of her Majesty's subjects? (Cries of "No.") Again, the new Act defined the word "disaffection." Formerly, criticism was held to be lawful so long as it was consistent with a desire to render obedience to lawful authority. But that was too liberal-spirited for Lord George Hamilton, and by his direction the law had been amended, and disaffection had been defined as including "disloyalty and all feelings of enmity." ("Shame.") The third and last change in the law to which he would call attention was that which enabled Indian magistrates to treat newspaper editors as suspected thieves and burglars were treated in this country—to call upon them to provide substantial sureties, and in default of their so doing, to commit them to gaol with hard labour. ("Shame.") The security of the Government of India depended on the conviction of the people in the justice and fair play of the British Government; and never had that conviction been so shaken as it had been within the last two years. It was a calamity that it should be so—(hear, hear)—and it was a still greater calamity that this country thus confessed its weakness and its want of trust in the people. He appealed to those who had to guide the destinies of the nation to turn back from this policy of coercion and repression, and to substitute for it that policy of conciliation, trust, and confidence in the people, by which the British Empire in India had been built up, and by which alone it could be maintained. (Cheers.)

Mr. S. Zeauddin A. Balkhi seconded the resolution. Sir William Wedderburn told the House of Commons the other day that it needed a long spoon to sup kale with the Government of India, and indeed it seemed that it required a bold man to give voice to the truth when for so doing he was liable to be sent to gaol. The natives of India only desired freedom to express their views from time to time on the measures of the Government: they could best give expression to those views at public meetings and in the Native Press, but they were now deprived of that privilege. Surely it was an unwise policy to stop freedom of discussion. (Hear, hear.) If sedition existed that was not the way to stamp it out; it would only drive it in deeper and deeper. (Cheers.)

Mr. Akbar said his vivid Eastern imagination enabled him to watch an Indian returning from this land of liberty to his home on the other side of the Arabian Sea; to see the police arresting him and the magistrate committing him to prison for no crime whatever—for doing that which was the inalienable right of every Englishman. Surely it was a hopeful and cheery prospect! They were offered the alternatives to "be quiet and suffer" or "to speak and go to gaol." He appealed to the great English nation at least to give them justice.

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

Mr. A. M. Bose then proposed:—

That this meeting views with deep regret and alarm the introduction of a Bill in the Legislative Council of Bengal to deprive the metropolis of India of the measure of municipal self-government, which was conferred on it so far back as 1876 by the Government of the day, after mature deliberation and on competent advice, and which has redounded in every respect to the advantage and improvement of the city, as testified to alike by high and responsible official opinion, and by independent evidence. This meeting earnestly appeals to the Government to withdraw, or at least to very greatly modify, a measure which is seriously reactionary in its character, unsatisfactory in its provisions, and calculated to do grave injury to the cause of good administration and municipal progress.

He said it appeared as if a period of reaction had set in; the hands on the dial were being set back, retrogression was the order of the day, and it was being persisted in relentlessly, crushing the liberties of the people in a helpless land, and undoing all the best that had been accomplished in the past in British India—undoing the work of illustrious statesmen who had consolidated the foundations of the Empire by adopting a policy of generous trust in the people—(hear, hear)—and whose memories were embalmed in the grateful recollections of the Natives. This was a melancholy view of the situation, but all the same it was a true one, and they were now called upon to stand up in defence of the liberties of the people, and in vindication of the policy which the sagacity and foresight of those illustrious statesmen had adopted. Surely no true Englishman could view without alarm these legislative enactments, this tide of retrogression, and this unfortunate reactionary policy. (Hear, hear.) The Corporation of Calcutta had given ample proof of the wisdom of the policy of representative government which was introduced by Sir Richard Temple, whose name would be remembered with affectionate regard long after the names of other rulers of Bengal had sunk into oblivion. (Cheers.) Representative government, as he could vouch, had been a remarkable success in Calcutta, and he could not conceive how the Lieutenant-Governor—of whom he wished to speak with the greatest respect—could have committed this huge blunder, which must, unless rectified, have most disastrous results. He trusted that the Government would pause before they proceeded further in the direction of this legislation, and he hoped, too, they would soon again see their Chairman—the Grand Old Man of India—a member of the British House of Commons. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. N. Roy seconded. This Bill, he averred, was only one instance of the repressive policy now dominant in India, a policy which was endangering their lives, their liberties, and their future hopes. (Hear, hear.) This was a moment of grave and imminent peril, and he hoped they would all prove equal to the occasion. He for one had some faith that justice would be done them, for such faith had been justified in the past. Their history proved that there had been periods of true and genuine statesmanship. The Marquis of Ripon had shown himself to be one of their best friends, and India would

never forget how he undid the evil work accomplished under the *régime* of Lord Lytton in regard to cutting down the liberties of the Press. India was not to be ruled by suspicion and distrust, but by sympathy with and confidence in the people. It was the permanent officials and not the Viceroy who introduced this reactionary policy. Why should Indians be treated as political helots? Englishmen seemed to forget that when once liberty had been given to the people of India it could not be stopped, and whether they were to be deemed seditious or not the younger generation would not stand silently by and see their privileges filched away. (Cheers.) Now, it was not sufficient that they should merely protest by word of mouth. He suggested that if this Municipal Bill were forced on, the representative Municipal Commissioners should at once resign their seats and seek re-election, while it would be well, too, for Mr. Bose and Mr. Dutt, who were ratepayers of Calcutta, to set a good example by refusing to pay any more rates. (Hear, hear.) If they did that hundreds would act in the same way, and thus an effectual and emphatic protest would be made. (Cheers.)

The resolution having been carried *nem. diss.*, Mr. H. S. Khalil proposed:—

That this Conference regrets the unjust decision of the present Government, charging to the finances of India the whole cost of the late war waged beyond the Indian frontier for Imperial purposes; that in strict justice a fair share of it should have been defrayed from the Imperial exchequer, as was done in 1881; that in the present instance the injustice done is tantamount to cruelty, considering the disasters and misfortunes from which the people of India have lately suffered.

He submitted that as a matter of justice England was bound to defray the costs of these frontier wars, which were undertaken for Imperial purposes and were the outcome of Imperial policy. He condemned the action of the present Government in reversing the wise decision of their predecessors as to the abandonment of the Chitral Valley. It was very easy and very cheap to indulge in these luxuries at the expense of an unrepresented people who were despotically governed, but surely if these wars were carried on simply to keep up England's power, and as Lord Beaconsfield once said, to secure the entire command by Great Britain of the gates of her Eastern empire, the Imperial Government ought to pay the expense of them. (Hear, hear.) Nothing could be more absurd than to say that the Indian Government was willing to pay, and that the financial position of India justified the imposition of the charge upon her. Let the British people be just before being generous, and let them realise how famine and disease had made the burden upon India of late years more intolerable than ever. (Cheers.)

Mr. Balwant Singh denied that India had gained anything by the late wars, and pointed out that she had lost hundreds of precious lives. Surely in that way she had contributed her fair share of the cost of maintaining British prestige.

The resolution having been carried, Mr. Chukabutty moved, "That a copy of all the resolutions be forwarded by the Chairman to the Secretary of State for India, to the Leader of the House of Commons, and to the Leader of her Majesty's Opposition."

Mr. Boyd, as an Englishman, heartily seconded, and urged Indians to take more frequent opportunities of acquainting the people of England with their grievances. (Hear, hear.)

This resolution too was carried, and the proceedings, which had been most enthusiastic throughout, terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, June 16.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE NEW LOAN BILL.
SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN'S AMENDMENT.
RESUMED DEBATE.

The adjourned debate on Sir William Wedderburn's amendment to the motion for the second reading of the East India Loan Bill, declaring that "this House declines to sanction a sterling loan of £10,000,000 until a Select Committee, on an examination of the East India accounts, shall have reported that such loan is in the interest of the Indian taxpayer, and will not unduly increase the burden he now sustains," was resumed.

Mr. Swift MacNeill, supporting the amendment, complained that there were no words in the Bill limiting or defining the specific purposes to which the money was to be applied. There was a proposal, however, that over two millions and a-half should be expended on railways. Why should not these railways be left to private enterprise? He believed this sum would not be expended in the interests of the Indian people, but in the interests of English capitalists and of the iron and steel traders of this country. On the other hand, there was the greatest stinginess in expenditure on such works as irrigation, because in such works the labour would be unskilled, and would therefore be Indian. The noble lord in his triumphant pæan as to India paying its way, pointed out that, while the revenue in this country fluctuated in times of adversity, it was stable during similar periods in India. But why was that? Because the means of life were mercilessly taxed in India. If the unfortunate people who earned an average of three half-pence a day wanted to buy a pennyworth of salt, which was absolutely necessary in a rice-eating country, they had to pay 1s. 9d. for it. And it was now proposed to raise ten millions sterling on the resources of a country taxed in that brutal fashion. The people of India had no influence on the votes for members of Parliament. It was a terrible thought that the humblest man in this country who dropped a voting paper into a ballot-box exercised more influence on the legislation of the House than the millions of India. The people of India should on that account have all the more influence on the consciences of members of the House. Yet those members who tried to do their best for the people of India were subjected to unfriendly and discourteous criticism at the hands of the noble lord the Secretary for India. If India had self-government, the country would be governed in the interest of its own people, and not as now for the benefit of a class in this country. (Cheers.)

Mr. Vicary Gibbs said the hon. member for South Donegal had spoken as if he considered that the Government of India, animated by an unnatural malignancy, were grinding the faces of the poor of India for their own amusement and satisfaction. (Hear, hear.) He took exception to the financial proposals of the Government, but he could not associate himself with the attack which had been made upon them. When the hon. member for Dumfriesshire (Mr. Souttar) pointed out on Tuesday night how the rupee had been inflated in value by artificial means, an hon. member asked, "What about the English shilling?" But there was no analogy between the rupee and the shilling, except that both were made of silver. The rupee was an integral part of the actual wealth of India, and on it the credit of the country was based and depended. The shilling was a mere token, only allowed to be used in the payment of small debts, and it did not matter for the credit of the country—though it did matter in some things which he need not go into—whether it was worth 4d. or its nominal amount. The rupee at present was a token of such methods as were adopted by bankrupt South American Republics, as had been abandoned by all business men in all civilised countries, and as must lead any country which adopted them into disaster. That the effects had already been felt in India was indicated by the admission in the despatch that the financial position was intolerable. What would in England be analogous to what had been done in India was the "sweating" of sovereigns. The noble lord had referred appreciatively to the steady rise in the exchange value of the rupee in the last eight years. But that rise had been produced, not by natural causes, but by restricting, at the expense of the people of India, the amount of currency, and the restriction had been carried to a point which had caused the greatest inconvenience to Indian commerce. The noble lord had rebuked him for saying that the Government had acted unjustly to the poor of India; so he would only say that the action of the Government, no doubt entirely against their wishes and intentions, had resulted in the grossest injustice to the poor of India. The noble lord had pointed out the enormous advantage which this artificial rise in the exchange value of the rupee had given to Indian finance; but he had not pointed out the corresponding disadvantage which the people and industries of India had suffered. The Government of India had been able to balance its Budget; but the industries of India had been crippled by being put at enormous disadvantage with China, Mexico, and other countries on a silver basis. While the exchange continued low an enormous stimulus was given to industry; and, in the end, the prosperity of India must depend on her balance of exports over imports. By no other means could India pay her large gold debt in England. The noble lord described as "an act of lunacy" the course of reopening the mints—recommended by men who had studied the question all their lives, and whose business depended on the soundness of their advice. In 1893 Mexico was in a very similar position to India. Mexico was on a silver basis; it had a large gold debt in England; and had borrowed large amounts for railways, the interest on which had to be paid in gold. When silver was depreciated by the action of the Indian Government, Mexico had to consider whether it would remain "a dumping-ground for silver," and Mexico decided that it would be "an act of lunacy" to close its mints, taking exactly the opposite course to India. What was the result? In India up to 1893 the ratio of exports to imports had been increasing; in 1894-95 the excess of balance of exports over imports was Rx. 37,000,000; in 1895-96, Rx. 36,000,000; in 1896-97, Rx. 23,000,000; and in 1897-98, Rx. 14,000,000. Therefore, since the closing of the mints there had been a fall of 60 per cent. in the excess of exports over imports. The Mexican figures were equally simple. The balances of imports over exports in the corresponding years were 49 per cent. in 1893-94; 56 per cent. in 1894-95, 63 per cent. in 1895-96, and 66 per cent. in 1896-97. There was thus a steady, remarkable, and startling increase in the prosperity of the country. While India was declining 60 per cent., Mexico was advancing 40 per cent. In the face of such evidence the House would admit there was something to be said on the other side. In conclusion, he said that, having regard to the fact that the Committee which the noble lord had appointed to consider the Indian currency question had not given satisfaction to the great commercial communities of the country, he should have unhesitatingly supported the motion for a committee had it been proposed that the enquiry should be confined to financial matters. (Cheers.)

Mr. Pickersgill said he had no stake in India, but he had a most profound interest in the condition of that country's teeming population. If loans were intended to pay off existing debt, the action of the Government would be legitimate and meritorious; but unfortunately it invariably happened that the amount required to pay off existing debt only formed a comparatively small part of the total borrowing power which was asked for. On the present occasion the amount required to pay off debt was £3,500,000, whereas the borrowing powers extended to £10,000,000. The residue was to be devoted to the construction of railways and to enable the Government to tide over prospective difficulties. The real root of those difficulties consisted in the excessive amount of the home charges. Very high

authorities in India had pointed out that the country could not go on paying upwards of £16,000,000 for home charges, and that they must be reduced. That feeling was so strong that some years ago a committee was appointed to enquire into the home charges and to ascertain whether or not they could be reduced. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Banffshire that the present was a singularly inappropriate time for this Bill, because before the Committee had reported they were putting it into the power of the Indian Government to increase the aggregate amount of the home charges. The right hon. gentleman the member for Wolverhampton had said that 11 additional millions of debt for non-productive purposes had been incurred in the last two or three years. Whatever the precise figure was, it could not be denied that within the last few years the aggregate debt of India had been very considerably increased, and it was not too much to say that during the last ten years India had had to give the entire value of the excess of exports over her imports in order to meet the home obligations of the Government. That could not be otherwise than a drain upon the country. It was said that whatever direct loss the railways might have occasioned to the Government of India, their indirect benefit had been very great, especially in regard to the difficulties which the Government had to encounter in times of famine. But what would that avail if, in their professed policy of developing the country, the Government of India had produced the effect of impoverishing the people? (Hear, hear.) The existence of the plague threw some light on the extreme poverty of the people, and it might be regarded as the natural outcome of the forward policy and the poverty which it produced. Instead of pursuing still further the development of railways, he thought the time had come when the Government of India ought to look to more direct ways of improving the condition of the people, such as irrigation, improved methods of agriculture, and such a system of land assessment as would relieve the people of the intolerable burden they now had to bear. With regard to the capacity of the people to bear the burdens imposed upon them, he would point out that the land revenue for 1894-95, in crores of rupees, was 26·7; for 1895-96 it was 27·5; 1896-97, 25·4; 1897-98, 27·4; and for the current year 29. There was a loss of two crores in the first famine year, there was the average yield in the second, and in the third famine year a record collection. How was it that the Government would be able to secure that? It was simply through the medium of the Famine Relief Fund, over a million sterling of which had been spent in giving a fresh start to those who had lost all in the struggle. That was a mean policy which he could not think the people of this country would endorse. (Hear, hear.) The Secretary for India had himself borne testimony to the frugal, industrious, and orderly character of the vast mass of the Indian people. He regretted that almost the last Act with which the name of the present Viceroy would be associated would be this Bill for increasing the burdens of the people of India by ten millions. The noble lord had spoken of Lord Elgin, who was an amiable and, no doubt, able man, in terms of eulogy which were only appropriate to a Warren Hastings or a Lord Clive. It was the misfortune of Lord Elgin that he had been Viceroy in difficult and troubled times, and he regretted that the noble lord should have come under the influence of military jingoes and Press martinets. (Hear, hear.)

Sir Henry Fowler said: Some misstatements, or, perhaps, misunderstandings of fact, have been set before the House, and I think I should not be doing my duty if I did not attempt to correct them, especially as the forms of the House prevent the Secretary of State from interposing again in this debate. I have over and over again expressed my opinion of the admirable manner in which India is governed, and of the high character which the great Indian civil service bears, and which it has pre-eminently sustained during the past 12 months. (Hear, hear.) I can assure those hon. gentlemen who have been betrayed into expressions of censure upon that department of the public service that they do not represent to any appreciable extent the feelings of the members of this House or of the public outside. (Hear, hear.) I was amused just now by my hon. friend behind me when he referred to Warren Hastings and Lord Clive, and intimated that the present Viceroy should not have the same meed of honour awarded to him in respect of the *mens æqua in arduis* as has been awarded to them. I may suggest that if Lord Clive and Warren Hastings had had their proceedings discussed in this House on frequent occasions, and if those proceedings had been made the subject of Parliamentary enquiries, we should possibly not have had an Indian Empire. (Hear, hear.) There are four points upon which hon. members have completely misunderstood the facts. The hon. member for South Donegal always deals in superlatives, and we are obliged, when he addresses us about India, or Ireland, or England, to have discount tables with us for immediate use. (Laughter.) He stated that a burden of 16 millions was imposed upon the taxpayers of India for the purpose of meeting home charges, and he described the money as going to half-pay officers and others. I ventured at the time to correct him to the extent of half the sum which he mentioned, and he did not dispute my correction, but treated it airily, as if the difference between 16 millions and 8 millions was a difference of a few sovereigns. Let me now tell him what the figures really are for the present year. The amount which will have to be remitted from India to London this year is £16,286,500. Out of that amount the sum of £8,815,800 is to be sent over to pay the interest upon capital which has been advanced by persons in this country for the purpose of constructing railway works, canal irrigation works, and the other great public works of India. That £8,000,000 does not represent the entire revenue of the railways of India. The gross revenue of India for railways last year was upwards of 22 millions—I am speaking from recollection—and one-half of that sum went in expenses—in wages paid to the people of India and in stores consumed in India. Therefore half of the gross revenue of the Indian railways is expended in India. No doubt there are large charges in connexion with the Indian army, amounting to between five and six millions. Into that expenditure a Royal Commission has been enquiring, and the hon. member for Banffshire is a member of it, and we are anxiously awaiting its report. I may remind the House that when I was at the India Office a dispute about expenditure between the Indian Government and the Admiralty was referred to the arbitration of the Prime Minister and settled in a few weeks. Putting the whole railway capital of India together—taking into account, that is to say, famine railways, which are purely protective, and the great military railways, which are not producing revenue—I find that the return on this capital in 1895-96 was so seriously affected by famine and plague that it fell to what? To 5·3 per cent. That is not a very serious state of things. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member said that the Secretary of State is going to pay off capitalists who are receiving four per cent. and under. But by the operation by which the noble lord is going to get rid of these bloodsuckers—(laughter)—will he not be giving to India the credit of England? (Hear, hear.) I have always maintained that the true commercial policy for India is to extend her railway system as largely as possible. My hon. friends have encouraged me and cheered me when I have expressed that view, and commercial men have risen and given figures showing the enormous discrepancy between India and other countries in the mere mileage of railways. I am, in fact, responsible to a large extent for this railway expenditure, and I congratulate the noble lord on having carried on that expenditure under great difficulties. The policy was not initiated without considerable controversy, but the result has been most satisfactory. If we are to do good to India commercially we must facilitate the transit of her goods and open up her great natural resources. The one link that is wanted between production and consumption is the link of rapid, cheap, and efficient communication. (Hear, hear.) But a still more serious charge has been made with reference to the salt duties. I have never advocated the imposition of this tax, but it is as well that the facts concerning it should be stated correctly. In 1888 the tax on salt was fixed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees per 82 lb. The full amount then would be 5s., but it is nothing like that now. There has been an increase in the consumption of salt during the last ten years—an increase far exceeding the proportionate increase in the population. I worked it out very carefully with the assistance of the statisticians at the India Office, and the average consumption per head in India is $10\frac{3}{4}$ lb. per head per annum. Taking the average in the Indian family at five members, the taxation would fall at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ rupees per annum per family, or five annas per head. An anna is a penny, and this is the taxation. I do not say that it is not a heavy taxation. My hon. friend was very indignant about irrigation, and asked why do we not spend money on irrigation, remarking that he would prefer irrigation to railways. The last speaker also shared that view. Let us take the facts about irrigation. The Indian Government has not neglected irrigation. Since 1877, the year of the last great famine, what has been done? The canals and great works have received an extension of 14,000 miles, and there has been an increase of $3\frac{1}{4}$ million acres in the land irrigated, while the Indian Government has spent on great works 130 millions, and on smaller works 30 millions. You cannot irrigate all the land in India; it is not a process like making a railway. First, you have to deal with the great sources of irrigation, which are the wells; and scarcely less remarkable was the enormous development of well irrigation. It must be remembered, however, that one-eleventh of the whole area is available for well irrigation, and that reduces the figures very materially. My hon. friend asked, "Why do you not tap the rivers?" Certainly; but they must be tapped where there is sufficient water, and not taken at a point so as to create a swamp, and thus induce the danger of malaria. These irrigation works have proved to be a satisfactory investment to the Indian Government. Irrigation pays them better than anything else, because the Government charge for the water supply. The work is now carried out so perfectly that at the present time the land irrigated in India is capable of feeding 120 millions of the population. To say, therefore, that the Indian Government have neglected irrigation and that they do not spend money on the work is not a fair criticism. (Cheers.) Something has been said about the land tax; but the land tax is rent, not taxation. My hon. friend drew a picture of the Indian Government clutching at the sum given by the charity of Great Britain in order to repay themselves the land tax which had not been discharged owing to the famine. The entire cost for the two years 1896-8 of the remission of the land revenue and temporary suspension of the land revenue is Rx. 3,000,000. What is Sir James Westland's estimate for next year? He has estimated this temporary suspension in remission at Rx. 700,000. He may have taken too sanguine a view of the position. (Hear, hear.) I will not dispute that, but, at all events, it is not that terrible oppression which appears to be indicated by my hon. friend. (Cheers.) India has been described as a terribly over-taxed country; that we ought to commiserate, as we are bound to do, the poverty of the people; that we should do all we can to encourage agricultural banks, to improve agriculture, and by all possible means help the people of India, which I think we do with the aid of British capital and credit to a large extent. (Cheers.) I hope that the Committee over which I preside at this time will be able to increase the available capital to flow into India. But what is the taxation of India? The official statement of the Secretary of State for India placed on the Table of the House, for which he is personally responsible, and which is strictly accurate, says that without making any deduction of the proportion derived from excise and customs, which fall on the Natives of the Native States, the burden of taxation per head for 1898-9 is one rupee four annas and nine pice, which, at the exchange value of 1s. 4d., is 1s. 9d. per head.

Mr. S. Smith: Does that include the land tax?

Sir H. Fowler: There is no land tax in India. My hon. friend might as well include the rent of his house in Liverpool. (Cheers.) When the average land revenue is added the amount is two rupees seven annas, or, at the present exchange value, 3s. 4d. (Cheers.) I cannot sit still and hear the Government of India unfairly criticised, and I can only say with reference to the Bill which is before us that it is about as ordinary a Bill as can well be submitted to the consideration of Parliament. (Cheers.) The noble lord told us that he proposes to raise six millions in the course of the present year and

that he is going to pay off some of the debt. At the same time he takes borrowing powers; but Lord Kimberley took borrowing powers ten years ago, and those powers are exhausted. You could not have a Secretary of State, with the prospect of an emergency, without power to borrow money. It seems to me that it is a fair and reasonable proposal, and I am surprised at the moderation of the noble lord. I fear it will be a great deal more, and I am not sure that it will not have to be a great deal more; but so far it is as ordinary a financial operation as can be submitted. I therefore express the hope that having heard all these explanations, and being himself a member of the Commission which has not yet reported on the very question which he has raised in this amendment, my hon. friend will withdraw it and let us go on with the other business. (Cheers.)

Sir W. H. Houldsworth thought the House should be much indebted to Sir Henry Fowler for the statement he had made. He did not join in the criticisms that had been made about the general administration of Indian affairs, but he cordially agreed with the right hon. gentleman in his views regarding the railways in India. He should have thought that at this time of day, whether as regarded India or elsewhere, no one would have doubted that there was no better way of developing a country than by railways. At the same time he did feel bound, in view of the statement that had been made by the Secretary for India in regard to the future commercial prosperity of India, to say that that view was not shared in the slightest degree by those who were most competent to form an opinion upon it. The view of those engaged in commerce with India was that under present conditions there was every prospect of our commercial interests being very seriously jeopardised. The margin of exports over imports was very seriously diminishing, and he could not see that the plague and the famine supplied an adequate reason for it. At the present moment those engaged in industry and commerce with India had little—he was almost inclined to say no—confidence whatever in the financial policy of the Indian Government. Some of them thought that the Indian Government took too narrow a view of the situation, and did not seem to realise that the fabric of the Indian Empire did not depend upon questions of exchange, but depended upon the development of the country and the increase of the commerce of the country with the rest of the world. Any policy that was pursued which affected the extension of the commerce of the country would react upon the Government and upon the Government finance. If the Indian Government could take a wider view of the whole circumstances of the case they would come to the conclusion that the question of exchange, the question of how much they would get for their rupees in this country in order to pay their debt, was a very small question compared with a policy which would develop the resources of the country and so increase its revenue and exports. The fact was that the officials in India, and perhaps the officials here, regarded their responsibility for squaring the Budgets as the dominant question, and in consequence they lost sight of some very great matters which would help their finance. The financial policy that was being pursued not only did not develop India, but actually strangulated the resources of the country and hampered its trade. He thought there was good ground for a considerable amount of distrust of the Indian Government. In regard to the Committee over which the member for Wolverhampton presided, he thought it had been rather differently constituted from what had been expected. The right hon. gentleman had said that the Committee would do all it possibly could with the information at its disposal to find a solution of the difficulty. But how would the Indian Government treat the Committee? In a despatch from the Indian Government to the Secretary for India it was said that the Committee must be told that the question of principle was no longer at issue, and that their attention was only invited to the practical matter of effectively establishing a gold standard. That was the demand of the Indian Government. He hoped the noble lord would be strong enough to resist these mandates of the Indian Government. There was a great feeling of uneasiness with regard to the way in which this matter was going to be considered, and he was bound to add that the amount of secrecy which was being observed in regard to the Committee was doing a great deal of harm in the interests of the Committee itself, because it was making many people feel that its decision was a foregone conclusion. He trusted that the noble lord and the Chairman of the Committee would see their way to give a little more information outside, in order that they might have the benefit of the evidence of competent witnesses. It had been pointed out that there was a reserve balance under this Bill which the Indian Government might deal with in any way they chose. He trusted that no portion of this balance was to be devoted to the establishment of a gold standard in India. He thought the noble lord gave an assurance that no portion of it would be so devoted, but there was a very considerable feeling of distrust of the Indian Government on this question. They ought to have a full assurance that under no circumstances whatever should the Indian Government be able to set up a gold standard. It was contemplated by the noble lord that they might withdraw their Council bills, and so keep up a mere artificial exchange at 1s. 4d., which he (Sir W. Houldsworth) thought would not be for the benefit of the country. This artificial maintenance of the exchange was doing a great deal of harm in India, and he hoped the noble lord and the Indian Government would not proceed further in the direction of maintaining the 1s. 4d. rupee. He had no intention of opposing the Bill, but he thought it necessary, as representing a commercial part of the country and knowing the opinions of important and influential classes not only there but in London, to make these remarks in order that they might thoroughly understand the position in which they stood. (Hear, hear).

Mr. Samuel Smith said the amount that India had to pay to this country for pensions and allowances of a non-effective kind was too great. The military pensions and allowances came to about five millions sterling a year, and he said that was an enormous charge. The member for Wolverhampton had stated that the salt tax was not oppressive, and that the consumption of salt in India was increasing, but he (Mr. Smith) maintained that the consumption was very small, and very much less than it should be. With regard to irrigation, he thought the amount spent on that was not so large as it should be, while the amount spent on railways was proportionately too large. The right hon. gentleman also spoke of the land tax as not being of the nature of a tax, but he (Mr. Smith) held that it was a misnomer to call it rent. He did not agree with the right hon. gentleman that the burden of taxation in India was light, because while in this country the average rate of taxation was 6 per cent., in India it was 9 per cent. (Hear, hear.)

The House divided, and there voted—

For the Amendment..	83
Against ..	245
Majority against ..	162

The Bill was then read a second time without division.

Tuesday, June 21.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITIONS.

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions against State regulation; from Bath (two), Glasgow, Thornton Heath, Govanhill, Blackheath, and Glasgow; to lie upon the Table.

OFFICIAL INTEREST IN THE POONA PRESS.

Mr. Herbert Lewis asked the Secretary of State for India, whether a Press Committee had been established in Poona:

Whether the Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular papers published at Poona had been asked to send copies to the Committee:

And, whether the Committee had any, and, if so, what power of censorship over such newspapers.

Lord G. Hamilton: Under the existing law of India, no Committee which may have been appointed in Poona or elsewhere, could have any power of censorship over the Press. Its functions would necessarily be limited to keeping the responsible officials informed as to the character of the matter published in the newspapers.

SUNDAY CLOSING OF JUTE MILLS. OFFICIAL APOLOGY.

Sir John Leng asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he was now able to correct the imputation on the agents of the Dundee Jute Mills in India of refusing to consent to the closing of those mills after three o'clock on Saturdays and the whole of Sundays, consequent on a misapprehension by the Indian Factory Inspector as to the ownership of another mill near Calcutta.

Lord G. Hamilton: Yes, sir; in reply to an enquiry I learn from the Government of India that the Factory Inspector, on whose report, transmitted by that Government, my previous answer to the hon. member was founded, is now found to have been mistaken in stating that the Agents who refused to close their mills on Saturday afternoons and Sundays are representatives of Dundee firms. I am glad to have this opportunity of correcting that mistake, and of expressing my regret that it should have been made.

INDIAN MEDICAL REGULATIONS. ADMINISTRATIVE GRADE.

Captain Norton asked the Secretary of State for India, when it was proposed to amend the Indian Medical Regulations so as to insure that officers of the Indian Medical Service who had no previous military experience, or at all events had not any lengthened period of experience in military duties, should be made to pass a longer period for military medical training than two months in the office of a principal medical officer prior to being selected for promotion to administrative grade:

Whether any changes and, if so, what changes, in that respect had been proposed or recommended:

And, when they would be promulgated.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have not received from the Indian Government any proposal to amend the Indian Medical Regulations in regard to the training medical officers selected for promotion to the Administrative Grade.

THE NEW LOAN BILL. COMMITTEE STAGE.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the First Lord of the Treasury, when it was proposed to take the East India Loan Bill in Committee.

Mr. Balfour said he should endeavour to take the Committee stage of the East India Loan Bill upon any opportunity which offered. He believed the Bill had been very generally discussed already.

Thursday, June 23.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

RECOGNITION OF PLAGUE SERVICES.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree asked the Secretary of State for India, whether Government intended to recognise in any special manner the services rendered during the last eighteen months by the civil and military officers and troops, both British and Native, who so nobly responded to the call made upon them, in many cases at the risk of their lives, to stamp out the plague in Bombay, Poona, Kurrachee, and other places in Western India; as well as the services of those who took a prominent part in quelling the disturbances that took place in consequence of the plague.

Lord G. Hamilton: As my hon. friend is aware, various temporary concessions in the shape of leave or special pay, or both, have already been granted to civil and military officers and to soldiers engaged on the work of suppressing the plague.

The authorities in India are fully aware of the excellent service that has been rendered for India by civil, by medical, and by military officials, as well as by many non-officials, in the arduous campaign against the plague, and the work so done will not be forgotten.

THE NEW LOAN BILL.

THE MINORITY ON THE DIVISION.

The following are the names of the Members who voted for Sir William Wedderburn's Amendment to the East India Loan Bill:—

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allen, William
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, M.
Barlow, John Emmott
Bayley, Thomas
Billson, Alfred
Brigg, John
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Burns, John
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Sir Charles
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Colville, John
Curran, Thomas (Sligo, S.)
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Doughty, George
Evans, Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
Harwood, George
Hedderwick, Thomas Charles H.
Hogan, James Francis
Holburn, J. G.
Holden, Sir Angus
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, David Brynmor
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Kinloch, Sir John George Smyth
Lambert, George
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Logan, John William
Lough, Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
MacAleese, Daniel
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Ewan, William
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Laren, Charles Benjamin
Maddison, Fred.
Mendl, Sigismund Ferdinand
Montagu, Sir S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd
Moss, Samuel
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick
O'Connor, T. P.
Oldroyd, Mark
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Price, Robert John
Roberts, John Bryn
Roberts, John H.
Robson, William Snowdon
Schwann, Charles E.
Shaw, Charles Edw.
Shee, James John
Smith, Samuel
Steadman, William Charles
Strachey, Edward
Sullivan, Donal
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Abel
Thomas, Alfred
Thomas, David Alfred
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, John Carvell
Wilson, Henry J.
Woods, Samuel
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Noes, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. Souttar.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

LORD ELGIN'S LETTER OF THANKS.

The Lord Mayor of London has received the following letter from the Viceroy of India, dated Simla, June 1:

MY LORD MAYOR,—I have received from the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund the first and second reports of the Central Committee and the more detailed reports of the provincial committees. These reports give a complete account of the operations of the fund from its inception until the Central Committee was dissolved upon the conclusion of its work in March last. I do myself the honour to forward a copy of these volumes for your lordship's acceptance, and I trust that you will find in them ample evidence that the munificent charity, of which the Mansion House Fund formed so preponderant a part, was of incalculable value in the relief of suffering and in the restoration of property. A supply of the volumes has been sent to the India Office, and should your lordship desire to be furnished with more copies for the purpose of communicating them to public bodies or to subscribers to the fund, I have no doubt that the Secretary of State will be happy to comply with any request of this nature that you may make.

I have, etc.,

ELGIN.

The report forwarded by the Viceroy states that the contributions from the United Kingdom amounted to £773,000, and exceeded the fund raised in 1876 by nearly £150,000. All classes, from the Queen-Empress, who subscribed £1,000, downwards, contributed handsomely, and the Committee could only tender respectfully their heartfelt thanks to all who devoted their time and influence towards gathering these funds together, as well as the subscribers themselves.

Literature says Major-General Innes, V.C., has undertaken to write a biography of Sir Henry Havelock Allan, who has left an immense collection of papers and letters. Major-General Innes was an intimate friend and old comrade of Sir Henry.

ET CAETERA.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee has embarked for England, on his annual visit, and is expected to reach London in a few days.

Sir John Scott, K.C.M.G., late Judicial Adviser to H.H. the Khedive of Egypt, and formerly a judge of the Bombay High Court, has been offered by Sir Francis Jeune the post of Assistant Judge Advocate General. On Wednesday last, the University of Oxford conferred on Sir John Scott the honorary degree of D.C.L.

Mr. James Grose, C.I.E., has just died at Utakamund. After studying at St. John's College, Cambridge, he entered the Indian Civil Service in 1860. He first served as assistant-collector and magistrate in Madras, becoming a Fellow of Madras University in 1868, and secretary to the board of revenue in 1870. In 1888, he went on special duty to Delhi. He became a member of the Madras Legislative Council in 1888 and 1891-2, a member of the board of revenue and commissioner of land revenue in 1889, and a member of the Executive Council in 1894. The Companionship of the Indian Empire was conferred upon him in 1896.

We take the following from the list of those who were "called" to the Bar on Wednesday last:—

Lincoln's Inn.—Mahimohun Ghose, Balliol College, Oxford, and Indian Civil Service; Merwanjee M. M. Bhownaggree, Balliol College, Oxford, and Wilson College, Bombay; Jotirao B. Khasgiwale, Baroda High School, India; Rahimkhan K. Khan, Allahabad University; Thomas M. French, Madras University; Hardeo S. Agarwala, Allahabad University; Bawa D. Singh; Diwan M. Das; Har B. Singh; Balwant Singh, Punjab University; Beni P. Khosla, Lahore University; Abdul Aziz; Champat R. Jain; Prem L. Seth; Syed M. Shere, Calcutta University; Narayen D. Barmera; Mohammad Azim; Kunwar U. V. S. Raghubansi; and Bepin C. Chatterjee.

Inner Temple.—Pestonjee S. Patuick, Cambridge, and M.A., Bombay.

Middle Temple.—Ranjivan J. Mehta, Bombay University; Abdul Rasul, B.A., St. John's College, Oxford; Sewak Ram, Government College, Lahore, Calcutta and Punjab Universities; Vasudro R. Pandit, B.A., Scholar, Fitzwilliam Hall, Cambridge, B.A. Calcutta University, Ousely Scholar, Imperial Institute; Kanji P. Dodia.

Gray's Inn.—Pagadala R. Naidu; Jnanendra N. Ray; Dhanpat Rai; Haus Raj Bhandari; Bijay K. Acharyya, B.A., Calcutta University, LL.B. Edinburgh.

The P. and O. s.s. "Caledonia," from Bombay, is due in London on June 25. Among other passengers are the following:—Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee; Mr. A. Chuckersutty; Mr. Hari Gunapat Raj Ghurpurich; Mr. S. Rahimtoola; Mrs. Ganjie and child; Capt. P. A. Kenna; Capt. and Mrs. C. R. Kendall; Capt. C. E. N. Priestly; and Lieut.-Col. Fenning.

The s.s. "Arabia" (P. and O.), left London for Bombay on June 23. Her list of passengers includes the following:—Mr. B. K. Acharyya; Mr. A. Aziz; Capt. C. C. Reid; Major D. H. Drummond; Capt. G. B. Unwin; Capt. Rigby; Lieut. H. J. P. Browne; Hon. Justice Macpherson; and Surgeon-Capt. Bird.

The British India Steam Navigation Co.'s s.s. "Matiana" leaves London on June 24 for Aden, Colombo, and Calcutta, with the following passengers:—Mr. J. K. Deane; Mr. H. Hatton; Mr. J. Coles; and Mr. E. Windsor.

The annual dinner of the Indian Majlis, Cambridge, was held at Bull's Hotel on Saturday, the 11th inst., Mr. J. Vaz, the President, in the chair. Among the visitors were Mr. R. C. Dutt, C.I.E., Mr. A. M. Bose, and Mr. Edmund Russell from New York. After the usual toasts to the Empress and the Royal Family, Mr. J. Baptista gave the toast of "India." Mr. Bose, in reply, said that it gave him great pleasure to find that a true feeling of patriotism was growing up among young Indians. Patriotism ought to be a creed with Indians. Mr. N. K. Aloni proposed "The Land we live in." Mr. E. Russell responded, and recited a poem of his own composition on Ancient India. After the toasts of "the 'Varsity" and the "Indian Majlis," the President proposed "Our Guests," expressing on behalf of the Majlis a hearty appreciation of the work done by Mr. Dutt and Mr. Bose in the cause of their country. He pointed to the great moral courage displayed by Mr. Dutt when in 1868 he started for England in the company of two other Bengali youths in spite of the great opposition of his family and friends. Mr. Bose had, in the words of the President, discovered Cambridge in 1871. The President also dwelt on the large sympathy and support which Indians find outside India—feelings that render invaluable service to the cause of the country. Mr. R. C. Dutt responded in an impressive speech. It made him happy to find that young India is ready to carry forward the great work undertaken by the older generation. He was sure that if educated Indians continued to persist in their endeavours the day will come soon when they will have obtained most, if not all, of what they asked from their English rulers. The interesting proceedings closed with the usual toast of "The President."

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